DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY IN MEDIEVAL JAPANESE BUDDHISM

Edited by Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY IN MEDIEVAL JAPANESE BUDDHISM

The medieval period of Japanese religious history is commonly known as one in which there was a radical transformation of the religious culture. This book suggests an alternate approach to understanding the dynamics of that transformation. One main focus of analysis is what Buddhism – its practices and doctrines, its traditions and institutions – meant for medieval Japanese peoples themselves. This is achieved by using the notions of discourse and ideology and juxtaposing various topics on shared linguistic practices and discursive worlds of medieval Japanese Buddhism.

Collating contributions from outstanding scholars in the field of Buddhist Studies – such as Jacqueline Stone, Steve Heine, Ryuichi Abe and Mark Unno – the editors have created a highly significant work. It builds on preliminary work on rethinking the importance and meaning of Kamakura Buddhism published recently in English, and adds greatly to the debate.

Richard K. Payne is Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. He was convener of the doctoral program in the Cultural and Historical Studies of Religions from 1996 to 2002. His most recent publications include *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitabha*, with Kenneth Tanaka, and *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*.

Taigen Dan Leighton is currently Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, California. He received his PhD from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California.

ROUTLEDGE CRITICAL STUDIES IN BUDDHISM

General Editors:
Charles S. Prebish and Damien Keown

Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism is a comprehensive study of the Buddhist tradition. The series explores this complex and extensive tradition from a variety of perspectives, using a range of different methodologies.

The Series is diverse in its focus, including historical studies, textual translations and commentaries, sociological investigations, bibliographic studies, and considerations of religious practice as an expression of Buddhism's integral religiosity. It also presents materials on modern intellectual historical studies, including the role of Buddhist thought and scholarship in a contemporary, critical context and in the light of current social issues. The series is expansive and imaginative in scope, spanning more than two and a half millennia of Buddhist history. It is receptive to all research works that inform and advance our knowledge and understanding of the Buddhist tradition.

A SURVEY OF VINAYA LITERATURE
Charles S. Prebish

THE REFLEXIVE NATURE OF AWARENESS
Paul Williams

ALTRUISM AND REALITY
Paul Williams

BUDDHISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS
Edited by Damien Keown, Charles Prebish, Wayne Husted

WOMEN IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA
Kathryn R. Blackstone

THE RESONANCE OF EMPTINESS
Gay Watson

AMERICAN BUDDHISM
Edited by Duncan Ryuken Williams and Christopher Queen

IMAGING WISDOM
Jacob N. Kinnard

PAIN AND ITS ENDING
Carol S. Anderson

EMPTINESS APPRAISED
David F. Burton

THE SOUND OF LIBERATING TRUTH
Edited by Sallie B. King and Paul O. Ingram

BUDDHIST THEOLOGY
Edited by Roger R. Jackson and John J. Makransky

THE GLORIOUS DEEDS OF PURNA
Joel Tatelman

EARLY BUDDHISM – A NEW APPROACH
Sue Hamilton

CONTEMPORARY BUDDHIST ETHICS
Edited by Damien Keown

INNOVATIVE BUDDHIST WOMEN
Edited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo

TEACHING BUDDHISM IN THE WEST
Edited by V. S. Hori, R. P. Hayes and J. M. Shields

EMPTY VISION
David L. McMahan

SELF, REALITY AND REASON IN TIBETAN PHILOSOPHY
Thupten Jinpa

IN DEFENSE OF DHARMA
Tessa J. Bartholomeusz

BUDDHIST PHENOMENOLOGY
Dan Lusthaus

RELIGIOUS MOTIVATION AND THE ORIGINS OF BUDDHISM
Torkel Brekke

DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIAN BUDDHISM
Michelle Spuler

ZEN WAR STORIES
Brian Victoria

THE BUDDHIST UNCONSCIOUS
William S. Waldron

INDIAN BUDDHIST THEORIES OF PERSONS
James Duerlinger

ACTION DHARMA
Edited by Christopher Queen, Charles Prebish & Damien Keown

TIBETAN AND ZEN BUDDHISM IN BRITAIN
David N. Kay

THE CONCEPT OF THE BUDDHA
Guang Xing

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DESIRE IN THE BUDDHIST PALI CANON
David Webster

THE NOTION OF *DITTHI* IN THERAVADA BUDDHISM
Paul Fuller

THE BUDDHIST THEORY OF SELF-COGNITION
Zhihua Yao

MORAL THEORY IN SANTIDEVA'S SIKSASAMUCCAYA
Barbra R. Clayton

BUDDHIST STUDIES FROM INDIA TO AMERICA
Edited by Damien Keown

DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY IN MEDIEVAL JAPANESE BUDDHISM
Edited by Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton

The following titles are published in association with the *Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies*

Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies
a project of The Society for the Wider Understanding of the Buddhist Tradition

The *Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* conducts and promotes rigorous teaching and research into all forms of the Buddhist tradition.

EARLY BUDDHIST METAPHYSICS
Noa Ronkin

MIPHAM'S DIALECTICS AND THE DEBATES ON EMPTINESS
Karma Phuntsho

HOW BUDDHISM BEGAN
The conditioned genesis of the early teachings
Richard F. Gombrich

DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGY IN MEDIEVAL JAPANESE BUDDHISM

Edited by Richard K. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2006
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2006.

"To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's
collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk."

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Discourse and ideology in medieval Japanese Buddhism / Richard K. Payne,
Taigen Dan Leighton.
p. cm.
Includes bibliograhical references and index.
ISBN 0-415-35917-1 (alk. paper)
1. Buddhism—Japan—History—1185–1600. I. Payne, Richard Karl.
II. Leighton, Taigen Daniel.
BQ687.D57 2005
294.3′0952′0902—dc22
2005012119

ISBN10: 0-415-35917-1 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0-203-00727-1 (ebk)

ISBN13: 978-0-415-35917-7 (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-203-00727-3 (ebk)

TO MY WIFE, BONNIE ANN PAYNE,
FOR BELIEVING IN ME
Richard K. Payne

CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Ryūichi Abé is Edwin O. Reischauer Institute Professor of Japanese Religions in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. His publications include *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* and *Great Fool: Zen Master Ryōkan*. He is on the editorial board of the *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*.

Mark L. Blum is Associate Professor, Department of East Asian Studies, State University of New York at Albany, Research Associate at Otani University, Bukkyo University, Harvard University, and the Jōdoshū Research Insitute. In addition he serves as a Senior Editor for the Handbook of Oriental Studies, Brill Academic Press. He has authored *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism*, and is co-editor with Yasutomi Shinya of *Rennyo and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*.

James L. Ford is Associate Professor of East Asian Religions at Wake Forest University. His area of specialization is medieval Japanese Buddhism and his study of the Japanese monk Jōkei (1155–1213) and Buddhist devotion in early medieval Japan is published by Oxford University Press. He also serves as Executive Secretary of the Society for the Study of Japanese Religions and co-chair of the Japanese Religions group within the American Academy of Religion.

Steven Heine is Professor of Religious Studies and History and Director of the Institute for Asian Studies at Florida International University. A specialist on the formation of Zen in Japan, especially in the life and thought of Dōgen, Heine's publications include *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition*, *Shifting Shape*, *Shaping Text*, *Opening a Mountain*, *The Koan*, *The Zen Canon*, and *Zen Classics*, among others. He is also editor of the Japan Studies Review.

Taigen Dan Leighton is Adjunct Professor at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. He is author of *Faces*

of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Archetypes and Their Modern Expression; and is editor and co-translator of *Dogen's Extensive Record, Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community, Cultivating the Empty Field: The Silent Illumination of Zen Master Hongzhi*, and *The Wholehearted Way*. He has also contributed articles to many other books and journals.

Eisho Nasu is the Hongwanji Professor of Jodo Shinshu Studies of the Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His area of specialization is the history of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, particularly Jōdo Shin-shū tradition. His publications include *Engaged Pure Land Buddhism: Challenges Facing Jodo Shinshu in the Contemporary World* (co-edited with Kenneth K. Tanaka).

Richard K. Payne is Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His area of specialization is the ritual practices of Shingon, Japanese tantric Buddhism, and his publications include *Approaching the Land of Bliss* (co-edited with Kenneth K. Tanaka), and *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*. He also serves as Chair of the Editorial Committee for *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, and of the Pure Land Buddhist Studies Series.

Fabio Rambelli is Professor of Religion and Semiotics at Sapporo University. He works on Shingon Buddhism and Buddhist–Shintō syncretism, especially from the standpoint of the relations between religion, ideology, and structures of signification, and of the intersections of intellectual discourses and everyday practices in the history of Japanese culture. His publications include *Vegetal Buddhas*, and *Buddhas and Kami in Japan* (co-edited with Mark Teeuwen).

Jacqueline I. Stone is Professor of Japanese Religions in the Department of Religion at Princeton University. Her chief area of specialization is medieval Japanese Buddhism, especially the Tendai and Nichiren traditions. She is the author of *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*.

Mark T. Unno is Assistant Professor of East Asian Religions, Department of Religious Studies, University of Oregon, specializing in medieval Japanese Buddhism, comparative religion, and psychology of religion. He is the author of *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light*, translator of Hayao Kawai, *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams*, editor of the upcoming volume *Between Cultures: Buddhism and Psychotherapy*, and author of articles on Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. He is on the board of the Society for Buddhist–Christian Studies and the editorial board of the *Journal of Religious Ethics*, and is a member of the Open Research Center of Ryukoku University.

Dale S. Wright is the David B. and Mary H. Gamble Professor of Religious Studies and Asian Studies at Occidental College in Los Angeles. His publications include *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism*, and, co-edited with Steven Heine, *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, and *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts*.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sometimes it seems that the poet was all too premonitory, because indeed the best laid plans do often go astray. Scheduled to run from Friday, 14 through Sunday, 16 September, 2001, plans for the international conference entitled "Language and Discourse in the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism," to be held at the Green Gulch Zen Center, did not take into account the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on the morning of Tuesday, September 11. Awakened in the early hours of that Tuesday morning by a telephone call from my daughter, living in Rhode Island at the time, I along with so many others watched in horror and confusion as the events of the morning unfolded.

Several of the conference participants – ironically those from furthest away, Japan – were already on site. Four of the presenters, Jacqueline Stone, Mark Unno, Mark Blum, and Ryūichi Abé, together with Jan Nattier, John McRae, and Luis Gómez, who had agreed to be discussants, were caught in a dilemma over the next few days – their desire to fulfill their commitment in conflict with the uncertainty and anxiety of the times, including the all-critical question of when air travel might be reinstituted. Meanwhile, Dale Wright called to say he would drive up from Southern California, and Mark Blum called to say he would be there if he could. But over the next few days nothing was heard from Fabio Rambelli.

Taigen Leighton and I were faced with a difficult decision. Do we go on with the conference, or cancel it? Given that a majority of the participants were either already on site or local, and we kept hearing on the news that air travel would be reinstituted in the very near future – at first within the day, then within another day or two – we decided to try to continue as best we could. Indeed, speaking for myself at least, it helped me to have the conference to focus on.

It turned out that Fabio, who had been in flight when US airspace was closed, was diverted to Vancouver. He eventually rented a car and drove straight through for sixteen hours to arrive in Marin unshaven, exhausted, and happy. On Saturday morning, when some air travel was finally just beginning to be restarted, Mark Blum set out on a cross-country journey

which finally involved three transfers – at each of which he was not sure whether he would be able to get any further, but always heading west. A limousine had been reserved for his pick-up, and we were fortunate that they showed enough initiative to find him as he arrived in Oakland rather than San Francisco. Carl Bielefeldt and Bernard Faure were kind enough to fill in with responses to all the papers, while Jan Nattier sent a fifteen-page handwritten fax commenting on Leighton's paper.

In light of the curtailed conference that we were able to hold at that time, Leighton and I decided to organize a session for the American Academy of Religions, meeting in Toronto in November 2002. The Buddhism section accepted the proposal, so Stone and Unno were able to present their papers, while Abé and Payne both took the opportunity to write entirely new papers. In addition, two more papers – those by James Ford and Eisho Nasu – were solicited in order to make the collection you now hold more comprehensive.

The original "Green Gulch conference" was co-sponsored by the San Francisco Zen Center and the Japan Foundation endowment of the Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union. Our thanks go to those institutions, and especially to Rev. Michael Wenger, President of the San Francisco Zen Center at the time of the conference, and Emila Heller and the other members of the Green Gulch Zen Center staff for their support and assistance. We also want to thank all the presenters and discussants for both the conference and the AAR session – whether they were able to actually participate or not. In addition, our thanks go to the reviewer, whose suggestions proved very helpful in the revision of the collection, and to the editorial and production staff of the press.

Richard K. Payne
Berkeley

1

INTRODUCTION

Richard K. Payne, with Taigen Dan Leighton

Among students of Buddhism and East Asian religions the medieval period of Japanese religious history is commonly known as one in which there was a radical transformation of the religious culture. The received tradition regarding this transformation typically focuses on formulaic expressions of polarized interpretations of the teachings of the Kamakura era founders of those forms of Buddhism that dominate the religious culture of modern Japan. Although this view has been called into question repeatedly over the past half century, it still holds sway over much of the field. This collection of essays suggests an alternate approach to understanding the dynamics of that transformation.

Considering this process of cultural change in medieval Japan,[1] we can ask: what constituted the change in religious culture of the time, and what does the change comprise? This question is intentionally constructed to blur the cause and effect structure of the familiar treatments of the era. The notion of cause and effect has an appealing clarity. Perhaps borrowed into historiography from classical Newtonian physics, its metaphorical significance has been obscured by its very clarity. It creates an artificial clarity out of the vagaries of human motivations.

For example, the idea of *mappō* is often asserted to have been a causal factor in the changes in the religious culture. Yet one also needs to consider the question of why the idea of *mappō* appealed to people in the era. Why did it become an organizing principle? The usual narrative goes like this: increase in war, pestilence, and famine leads to acceptance of *mappō* doctrine, which leads to the rise of the "new Buddhisms." To say that the era was actually marked by an increase in war, pestilence, and famine fails to take into account two important considerations. First, was this actually any different than preceding eras? And, second, to what extent did the idea of *mappō* contribute to the recording of these different events because they were now interpreted as forming part of a significant pattern?

How we study change of a religious culture depends – obviously, once we think of it this way – upon what we think religion is. Two of the most pervasive theories are that religion is *sui generis* (a self-generated system) or

that it is simply another word for worldview (*Weltanschauung*). Both of these have in recent decades come under serious and, in the view of many, convincing criticism. A third common understanding is that religion is primarily a matter of personal transformative experience – a view unsupported by the centrality of social and cultural dimensions of religion in defining what constitutes a personal transformative experience.

While the emphases of the essays collected here differ, some focusing on the views of individuals, others on practices, they all share an awareness that religion is not "a thing apart," that it is not *sui generis*. Religion – to the extent that it is an identifiably distinct social, or intersubjective, object – is understood as a member of a complex web of social practices and competing institutions. It is not a singular entity existing as an element within that web, but instead is itself an intricate network. Likewise, the constitution of that web or network is a dialectic – the structure of the web determines the possible ways in which religion can exist, while at the same time religion replicates and restructures the web of which it is a part. Clarified identification of what nodes and links of the web comprise religion is a consequence of analysis and reflection, rather than an inherent characteristic of any particular node or link.

Kocku von Stuckrad has specifically suggested that the value of attention to discourse is that it shifts our conception of what it is that we are examining when we concern ourselves with religion. He argues against the understanding that religion and its study are about inner states of mind – including beliefs and believings – suggesting instead that it is about social agents, who seek either to attain or to maintain positions of power and security.[2] Such an agonistic view of religion is a consequence of avoiding not only the emphasis on inner, mental states, but also the denatured, ahistorical conception of religions as the transmitters of profound teachings about the human condition, or as vast reservoirs of ancient wisdom.

Theoretical background: Wuthnow's *Communities of Discourse*

In his *Communities of Discourse* Robert Wuthnow investigates the relation between ideology and social structure in three different instances – the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the rise of European socialism. Key to his approach is the way in which he phrases his question. He asks: why do some ideologies survive, while others do not? More broadly, Wuthnow identifies his question as "the problem of articulation."[3] By this he means "the ways in which ideas are shaped by their social situations and yet manage to disengage from these situations."[4] The "problem of articulation" entails:

> a study of the ways in which social conditions in each period made cultural innovation possible, of variations in the extent to which each movement (as a carrier of its own distinctive ideology) became

> institutionalized in different societies, and of the ways in which the resulting ideologies were shaped by and yet succeeded in transcending their specific environments of origin.[5]

Although Wuthnow is concerned with European social movements, we can easily apply his approach to Japanese religious movements. The same question applies. All ideologies originate in some particular socio-historical context. Why do some of them come to be influential in other times and places? This is a key issue for contemporary, postmodern cultural criticism, which in many instances tends to give sole credence to the local, seeing any other perspective as simply the work of a hegemonic metanarrative. By analogy, we can consider the instance of geometry, which – while originating among the Greeks – has become a panhuman system of thought. To say that there is something uniquely "Greek" about it, and that it is therefore not relevant or applicable outside the social context of its origin, is to commit the genetic fallacy. A useful terminological distinction that avoids either discounting the articulation discussed by Wuthnow or simply reasserting the "local/ universal" dichotomy is that which has been employed by Miyazaki Fumiko and Duncan Williams, who contrast "local" with "translocal."[6]

Asking why some ideologies move beyond the context of their origin while others do not implicates an understanding of history that requires going outside of the notion that the survival of certain ideologies is in any way "natural," due perhaps to their superiority in one way or another. This is related to the view identified elsewhere as "retrospectivist historiography." This refers to the writing of history as if our own understandings, concerns, beliefs were the goal of a process of historical development – as if history is teleological, a straightforward progress leading naturally, indeed inevitably, and unequivocally to us.[7] In a much narrower usage, this is known as "the Whig intepretation of history," from Herbert Butterfield's book of the same name. According to Berkhofer, Butterfield "named such an interpretation after those optimistic nineteenth-century English gentlemen who believed that the history of the world was providentially intended to culminate in their times, which translated meant their England, their way of life, and ultimately their class."[8] He goes on to note that this approach to history continued into the modernization or developmental theories of social scientists in the second half of the twentieth century. It also clearly appears to continue to inform the historiography of religions, particularly where sectarian identity is involved.[9]

The perspective entailed by Wuthnow's approach to cultural change, however, requires an awareness that there are many alternative ideologies in competition with one another at any one time. In the case of medieval Japan there was, for example, the *Ji-shū* movement of Amida-centered Buddhism, inspired by Ippen. While popular and influential in its own time, and competitive with other forms of Amida-centered Buddhism such as Pure Land

(Jōdo-shū) and True Pure Land (Jōdo Shin-shū), the Ji-shū faded, so that at present it is represented by at most a handful of temples. In Wuthnow's perspective this is to be explained not in terms of any "broad theories of cultural change," but by examining specific historical events and social contexts. "Understanding the social contexts of each ideological movement then provides a basis from which to examine the internal structure of each ideology itself in order to illuminate the processes of articulation and disarticulation."[10]

Another theoretical shift that Wuthnow makes concerns culture – understanding what it is, and where it is located. Again, while Wuthnow is concerned with culture understood generally, we can apply his approach to religious culture specifically. Following an extensive critique of sociological and anthropological understandings of culture, Wuthnow concludes that culture cannot be understood as an abstract entity existing somewhere independently of its instantiation:

> Rather than consisting of internalized habits of mind or generalized value orientations, culture has come increasingly to be understood in public, observable symbols. Moreover, these symbols are not static, dehumanized accretions but are constituted in action. Practice is the key word. Culture is produced: it comes about through a series of actions, is expressed in action, and through action shapes the relations of individuals and societies.[11]

This understanding of culture leads to recognition of the need to attend "to speakers and audiences, discursive texts, the rituals in which discourse is embedded, and the social contexts in which it is produced."[12] The lived practices of followers are more to the point in the actual religious culture than are theoretical doctrines or simply their pronouncement by leading exponents. At the same time, this approach leads to a focus on institutions as the primary locus in which culture is "produced, enacted, and disseminated."[13]

Thus, attention is given not to abstract, universal social laws, but to specific, historically located institutions and agents:

> To understand how an ideology is shaped by its social environment, one must therefore examine the specific circumstances under which these expressions come into being, the audience to whom they are enunciated, the slogans and other materials that are available at the time for incorporation into discursive acts, the roles of speakers and audiences relative to one another and in relation to positions of power, and even the financial resources that make publishing activities possible. Examining these contexts of ideological production enables one to establish with greater clarity why a particular

constellation of ideas comes to be institutionalized successfully in a particular setting.[14]

In opposition to the idea of abstract, universal social laws, this particularity calls into question the entire project of making analogies between the history of Japanese Buddhism and the history of European Christianity. For example, the frequently made analogy between Kamakura era Buddhism and the Reformation, which has of course already been repeatedly critiqued but which remains a fairly standard image, implicitly assumes a universal pattern of progressive development – one that is implicitly modeled on the European term of the comparison.[15] The question may be raised: aren't there in fact similarities between the two? Yes, there are. However, there are two problems with justifying the analogy on the basis of there being similarities. First, and most simply, there are also differences. Second, similarities only emerge when two things are looked at from some particular interpretive perspective. The existence of similarities in itself is meaningless, and only takes on meaning when placed in relation to some particular theory.

Why discourse? Why ideology?

Why use the vantage points of discourse and ideology to examine medieval Japanese Buddhism? Before trying to answer that question, we should note that these terms are also meant as pointers toward a range of topical approaches that together involve a shift of historiographic concern from the exclusive focus on doctrines (a theological model) to a focus on religious praxis[16] within a social environment, what might be called a "discursive turn" in the study of religion.[17] Several other topics may be added to the list, including textuality, language, semiotics, and rhetoric.[18] We should note that what is being investigated here under the category of language is not the more traditional concerns of philology and etymology. This should not be understood as implying any denigration of these latter two approaches. Instead, there are two additional aspects of language that are more central to our concerns in this collection. On the one hand, many of the hermeneutic strategies employed in medieval Japan utilized techniques that involved manipulating language – specifically the language of authoritative texts – in order to elicit the meanings desired. The second dimension is the interpretation of the ways in which language, specifically religious language, is effective – that is, a philosophy of language.

One of our goals for this collection is to focus on what Buddhism – its practices and doctrines, its traditions and institutions – meant for medieval Japanese peoples themselves, rather than what it means for ourselves in the present day who are looking back at it through the twin filters of sectarian historiography and Western religious culture.[19] This does not mean trying to recapture the inner mental life of medieval Japanese Buddhists – an obviously

impracticable project – but means attempting to view medieval Japanese Buddhist praxis in terms of its own social, historical, and cultural location. At the same time we hope to facilitate a critical reflexivity about our own intellectual locatedness. Discourse and ideology, broadly understood, provide a lens for viewing medieval Japanese religiosity, recognizing that "Not all ideas in a religious system are shared by all participants; not all of them are integrated in a single overarching system; certainly many of them are not explicit."[20] Whatever credence one might give to the notion of "religious experience," it should certainly be clear that everything we know about religion exists within a discursive field, and carries ideological connotations.[21] This is a complex set of interrelations. For example, the discursive constraints of existing doctrinal formulations limit the range and logic of attempts at new formulations. As a specific instance, Shinran's formulation of *shinjin* could not have been formulated except in the context of the existing discourse on *bodhicitta* (Jpn. *bodaishin*). Conversely, thoughts about the nature of language ("language ideologies") also form part of religious reflection – whether language is considered to be the vehicle for realization of awakening or an impediment to it.

Discourse

"Discourse," like "rhetoric," has as its fundamental meaning "speech intended to convince." However, as used here, discourse is a broader category that includes cultural assumptions and religious beliefs, while rhetoric is more narrow, referring to specifically spoken or written argumentation. While in some usages "discourse" simply means a field of discussion limited by a range of topics, here both discourse and rhetoric take on a more coercive connotation. Discourse can serve to mystify the interests of the socially powerful; for example, making those interests appear to be simply a given, "the way things are." That such mystification does not always work[22] does not mean that it is not one of the functions of discourse. Rhetoric can structure the bases of argumentation in such a fashion as to entail desired conclusions.

Bruce Lincoln makes the point that discourse is enmeshed with social power, pointing out how "the complementary instruments of force and discourse have been and can be used in the construction and reconstruction of social groups and hierarchies."[23] This is relevant to the ways in which Buddhist sects deployed quasi-military forces (*sōhei*) in support of their social position.[24] As Lincoln expresses this point more fully, it suggests additional directions for research into the enmeshment of discourse and force in medieval Japan:

> When previously persuasive discourses no longer persuade and previously prevalent sentiments no longer prevail, society enters a

> situation of fluidity and crisis. In such moments competing groups continue to deploy strategic discourses and may also make use of coercive force as they struggle, not just to seize or retain power, but to reshape the borders and hierarchic order of society itself.[25]

As mentioned above, Kocku von Stuckrad has also focused on discourse, suggesting that it necessarily entails communication and action. For von Stuckrad, concentration on communication and action mean:

> that we address religious traditions as power ingredients of public discourse. Religions are powerful not because they reveal transcendent truths or the effects of an ontologized "History", but because they serve as instruments in the communicative formation of identity and provide people with a concrete script of action.[26]

He goes on to explain that a "field of discourse" results from making visible "the continuities, adaptations, and transfers of meanings and positions in a setting of changing power relations."[27] This understanding is expanded upon by a quote from Rüdiger Ullrich, who points out that in a field of discourse:

> actors are not autonomous individuals but members of groups/classes that act in a social space ("field of action" [*Handlungsfeld*]). This space – through the relational web of alliances and oppositions – is divided into "fields of tension" [*Spannungsfelder*] of social debate. The unity, which thus arranges the contexts of action, constitutes a "field of discourse."[28]

Ideology

The concept of ideology dates from the end of the eighteenth century, when it was proposed by the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy to refer to a "science of ideas." This positive definition was quickly inverted by Napoleon, who gave it a negative connotation – Napoleon's rhetorical strategy being motivated by the fact that de Tracy and his colleagues were associated with republicanism.[29] Following on her discussion of this historical origin of the term ideology and its connotations, Kathryn Woolard goes on to to identify four understandings of the concept as found in contemporary use. These "four strands" of understanding have to do with: subjective ideation; social position; social, political, or economic power; and distortion.

The first of these four strands, subjective ideation, is the most neutral usage – comparable to de Tracy's – and is found in social scientific approaches to the study of society. Woolard points out, however, that in much recent usage, "ideology is not necessarily conscious, deliberate, or systematically organized thought, or even thought at all; it is behavioral, practical,

prereflective, or structural. . . . And even the most material aspects of life are invested with meaning, rife with signification when they are encompassed within the field of human action."[30] The second strand emphasizes that while ideologies represent themselves as universally true, they are "derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular social position."[31] Linking ideology to power – whether social, political, military, or economic – is the third strand, that in which ideology is understood to be "ideas, discourse, or signifying practices in the service of the struggle to acquire or maintain power."[32] The use of ideology as "a tool of any protagonist in the contestation of power" means that it can be employed by both those in positions of power (the dominant) and those aspiring to positions of power (the subaltern).[33] The fourth strand that Woolard identifies understands ideology as being the source of "distortion, illusion, error, mystification, or rationalization," either in "the defense of interest and power" or simply as the consequence of the "limitations on human perception and cognition."[34]

Slavoj Žižek has utilized an explicitly Hegelian schema to outline the characteristics of ideology. Ideology "in-itself" is ideology as the "'naturalization' of the symbolic order." He goes on to explain that "for discourse analysis, the very notion of an access to reality unbiased by any discursive devices or conjunctions with power is ideological. The 'zero level' of ideology consists in (mis)perceiving a discursive formation as an extra-discursive fact."[35] One of the important manifestations of this aspect of ideology is that it obscures the locatedness of the perspective from which a judgment is made.

Žižek's second stage, ideology "for-itself," is the instantiation of ideology in "ideological practices, rituals and institutions."[36] Žižek is drawing here on the work of Althusser, who highlights the role of practice in creating inner belief: "kneel down and *you shall believe that you knelt down because of your belief* – that is, your following the ritual is an expression/effect of your inner belief; in short, the 'external' ritual performatively generates its own ideological foundation."[37] This locates ideology not in the inaccessible inner reaches of individual thought, but in the visible, public manifestations that are seen as generating what can be said about ideology-as-belief-system. In terms of the study of religion, this serves to qualify the common "intellectualist" assumption that the causal relation is solely from thought to action, highlighting what has been discussed in ritual studies, the way in which action will determine thought.[38]

The third moment is that of the "in-and-for-itself," which Žižek describes as:

> neither ideology *qua* explicit doctrine, articulated convictions on the nature of man, society and the universe, nor ideology in its material existence (institutions, rituals and practices that give body

> to it), but the elusive network of implicit, quasi-"spontaneous" presuppositions and attitudes that form an irreducible moment of the reproduction of "non-ideological" (economic, legal, political, sexual . . .) practices.[39]

This formulation of the concept of ideology highlights its importance as a conceptual tool in understanding religion. Employed as such a tool, ideology allows us to explicate not only formal doctrines, and the practices that facilitate acceptance of doctrines, but also the implicit, unformulated motivations that inform religious practices.

Göran Therborn has also identified this dimension of ideology, choosing to define the term very loosely as:

> that aspect of the human condition under which human beings live their lives as conscious actors in a world that makes sense to them to varying degrees. Ideology is the medium through which this consciousness and meaningfulness operate. The consciousness of every new-born human being is formed through largely unconscious psychodynamic processes, and it functions in and through a symbolic order of language codes.[40]

Therborn's concern is with the uses of ideology by those in power to remain in power. However, control of ideology is never absolute. This is one of the issues considered in what is now known as "subaltern studies." Members of the lower classes and the marginalized are not simply the passive recipients of ideological power. They are quite capable of giving ideology, including religious doctrines, their own interpretation. Elsewhere, Fabio Rambelli has discussed the way in which various Pure Land heresies arose from this kind of reinterpretation.[41] Original enlightenment, the unqualified assurance of birth in Amida's Pure Land, and the doctrine of awakening in this very body all had their subaltern reinterpretations, creating what Rambelli, following Bakhtin, calls the carnivalesque. Bruce Lincoln has asserted that "resistance depends on – or better yet, amounts to – the continued mobilization of powerful sentiments of affinity, solidarity, and corporate identity at a lower level of integration than that championed by the would-be dominant group, toward whom corollary sentiments of estrangement and hostility are maintained."[42]

Linguistic practices/discursive worlds/ideological common grounds

The juxtaposition of the various topics examined by the contributors to this collection exposes to our view the shared linguistic practices and discursive worlds of medieval Japanese Buddhism. The majority of previous Western language scholarship on medieval Japanese Buddhism has tended to highlight

contrasts – often reducing them to simplistic doctrinal formulae. For example, Shinran and Dōgen are often set in opposition – an opposition apparently structured by the opposition of faith versus works familiar from the Western religious tradition. Here in this collection, however, we find that they employed fundamentally parallel interpretive strategies, reworking Chinese texts to express their own ideas. Similarly, we find Nichiren and Dōgen both employing and valorizing the discourse of the *Lotus Sūtra*, although not with the same ritual enactments or doctrinal interpretations. By attending to the language and discourse of the era, we can begin to see the water within which the fish of medieval Japanese Buddhism swam.

Following the first two chapters – Wright's introductory reflections on the role of metaphor and Blum's survey of Buddhist historiography – the collection is organized in a loosely chronological order. A number of intertwined and overlapping threads serve to link the separate chapters into a polythetic whole. These themes include Shintō and Shingon, Jōkei and Myōe, the *Lotus Sūtra* in Tendai and Dōgen, and Dōgen's and Shinran's use of wordplay as an interpretive device. Turning now to each of the contributions, we highlight the issues raised by each author relevant to the overall themes of the collection.

Dale S. Wright's chapter "Metaphor and Theory of Cultural Change: In Search of Skillful Means for Understanding Kamakura Buddhism" explores the relation between the formative power of metaphor and changes in culture. He proposes that there are three ways in which cultural change is motivated by changes in the ways people think: novel experience, inferential reasoning, and metaphorical extension. Wright asserts that these patterns of change apply both on the individual and on the societal level. On a societal level the first of these three patterns can be exemplified by new cultural information coming into a society through contact with another society. Inferential reasoning may motivate cultural change when, for example, contradictions in the belief system are discerned and a process of reconciliation is inititated. The majority of Wright's chapter, however, focuses on the third mode of cultural change, metaphorical extension.

Following a discussion of the extensive contemporary studies of metaphor and culture, Wright suggests that "since language runs through all cultural domains, none more so than religion, linguistic and discursive change is the most telling condition for larger cultural transformation. Metaphor, I claim, is the primary instrument for this kind of social transformation." Wright then explores several instances of culturally transformative metaphors in the religious tradition. One example of this is the agricultural metaphors, such as "good roots" and the seed imagery of the *bīja mantra*. In closing Wright introduces an issue that informs this collection: the metaphoric role of our own imagery of language as a "veil," "lens," "filter," or "reflection." In contrast to the implicit assumptions entailed by these metaphors, he suggests that "Anti-essentialist and non-dualistic ways of thinking in contemporary

thought – as well as in some forms of Buddhist thought – offer another way to conceive of the role of language as an enabling rather than an obstructing factor."

In his "The *Sangoku-Mappō* Construct: Buddhism, Nationalism, and History in Medieval Japan," Mark Blum examines the way in which two familiar Buddhist constructs – the "three countries" (Jpn. *sangoku*) and the "decay of the dharma" (Jpn. *mappō*) – interacted with one another in medieval Japan. These two rhetorical devices together served to create a sense of distinct nationhood for Japan, a sense that had not been present prior to the confluence of the two. Blum examines the way in which the three countries model not only provided an organizing structure for historiography, but also located authority for the Buddhist tradition in a sequential movement from India, the land of Śākyamuni Buddha, to China, the land in which the familiar sectarian divisions had their origins, and continuing on to Japan. Standing at the end of this sequence, Japan inherits the religious authority formerly held by the other two members of the three countries.

Blum calls attention, however, to the complicating role of *mappō* to this rhetoric. According to some calculations of the chronology of decline, the entry of Buddhism to Japan coincided with the onset of the third stage of decay. In this sense, Japanese Buddhism is in its entirety tainted by the inevitable decline of the *dharma*. The historical reflections of a wide variety of medieval Buddhist thinkers examined in Blum's chapter – Saichō, Gomyō, Annen, Kakuken, the *Mappō tōmyōki*, Yōsai, Jien, and Gyōnen – reveals the wide range of ways in which these two rhetorical devices worked together in creating a historical consciousness and sense of national identity.

Fabio Rambelli shifts the focus from rhetorical devices to texts *per se* in his "Materiality and Performativity of Sacred Texts in Medieval Japan." Our own practice of silently reading a text for its meaningful content is not the only use to which texts may be put. The role of textuality has been examined by a number of different authors, including Gérard Genette, whose notion of "transtextuality" – the entire cosmos of relations that exist between texts – Rambelli takes as a methodological warrant.[44] What Rambelli brings to this broader set of considerations is an examination of the medieval Japanese Buddhist use of texts. He focuses attention on three such uses: performance, materiality, and value. The performance of texts refers to their use in ways other than being read for meaning. This includes ritual texts that guide performance, as well as initiatory documents and certificates. The copying of texts served as a means of generating merit, especially when using precious materials: gold, silver, one's own blood.

The majority of Rambelli's examination, however, focuses on the *Reikiki*, which he identifies as "one of the most important texts of Ryōbu Shintō." This text served the different uses Rambelli outlines in his opening. It was, for example, a talisman. Indeed, the core of the text is claimed to be a

heavenly talisman, now located at the bottom of the sea of Japan, and authored by Mahāvairocana Tathāgata: the *dharmakāya buddha* central to the Shingon tradition, identified with Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess and legendary ancestress of the Imperial House. The materiality of the text as talisman condenses cosmic powers within itself. Another section of the text serves as a ritual template, linking the *mantra* it contains into a sequential initiatory process. Foundational to these uses, the ontology of the text establishes the teachings as embodied in a linguistic medium that is unconditioned and spontaneous, a view that Rambelli identifies as a "pansemiotic épistéme."

One of the sources of the "pansemiotic épistéme" referred to by Rambelli is India. Indian theories of language, introduced to Japan via tantric Buddhism with its prominent use of language as *mantra* or *dhāraṇī*, are examined by Richard K. Payne in his contribution to this collection, "Awakening and Language: Indic Theories of Language in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism." The presumption that religious truth can only be distorted by expression in language is not, in fact, as universally shared as is often believed in contemporary discussions of either religious studies generally or Buddhism specifically. Instead, the pansemiotic épistéme of Japan, together with its sources in India, demonstrates a view in which not only is language conducive to awakening, but religious truth is in some way identical with the expression of it.

Payne reviews classic Indian conceptions of the identity of words and things, Buddhist notions of language as purely conventional, and the ideas of the non-Buddhist author Bhartṛhari. Closer to the Buddhist *tantra*, the Spanda school of Kashmiri Śaivism understands language as central to the creation of the conceptual realm from which we need to become free, and therefore central to the task of becoming free. Finally, within Buddhist tantra *per se* the role of language in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, the cult of Vajrayoginī, and dGe lugs scholasticism are also examined. This survey is intended to sketch out the intellectual context of the sources of the Shingon tradition, amplifying the material found within those specific texts.

One of the literary genres of medieval Japanese Buddhism is a style of ritual text known as *kōshiki* – honoring and making offerings to particular prominent Buddhist figures. Focusing on the work of Jōkei, himself an understudied figure in the medieval era, James Ford opens up the importance of this genre of text. What an examination of *kōshiki* reveals for us is the character of medieval Japanese devotions. For example, Jōkei wrote *kōshiki* texts for rituals devoted to a variety of figures, including Śākyamuni, Maitreya, Avalokiteśvara, the Kasuga *kami*, Kṣitigarbha, Sarasvatī, Bhaisajyaguru, and Shōtoku Taishi. Thus, medieval Japanese Buddhism can clearly be seen to be broadly inclusive in its devotions. Equally importantly, *kōshiki* texts reveal the organization of one of the most popular ritual performances of the medieval era.

With this examination, Ford clearly displays the contestation of ideologies. The nonlinear and unmediated model of awakening as discussed by Paul Groner has come to be recognized as "one of the major characteristics of Japanese Buddhism."[45] However, Jōkei is revealed as firmly committed to the bodhisattva path as a gradual, progressive development.

Myōe Kōben was a practitioner of both the Kegon (Ch. Huayan, Skt. Avataṃsaka) and Shingon (Ch. Chenyen, Skt. Mantranaya) schools. Mark Unno explores Myōe's concern with the doctrine of *mappō*, specifically the question: how is it that awakening is possible under the condition of *mappō*? There were those in medieval Japan who resorted to antinomian strategies: if, for example, one is assured birth in Sukhāvatī – Amitābha Buddha's Land of Bliss – no matter what one does, one might as well do whatever one wants.[46] In contrast, Myōe came to emphasize the importance of adherence to the precepts as foundational for practice in the era of *mappō*.

In Unno's understanding the temporal bind in which Myōe finds himself – cut off from the power of the buddhas by the decadence of the dharma in his era, as also discussed by Blum – leads Myōe to create a non-linear temporal bridge to that power. This is the time of his visions and dreams. Because visionary and oneiric time are not constrained by the linear sequence of ordinary time, it is possible for Myōe not only to access the power of the buddhas, but also to "short-circuit" the sequence of cause and effect – another instance of the "shortening of the path." This theme is also featured in Jacqueline Stone's discussion of the *Lotus Sūtra* in this collection. All of the stages of practice become simultaneous. This is a theme within medieval Japanese Buddhism that is repeated by many of the important thinkers of the era. Kūkai's use of the idea of inherent enlightenment that is not created, changed or acquired but simply made manifest is one form of this idea, while Shinran's identification of *shinjin* in the present life with birth in Sukhāvatī, and birth in Sukhāvatī with full awakening is another.

Ryūichi Abé also considers Myōe in his "Sword, Words, and Deformity: On Myōe's Eccentricity." Abe looks at one particular event in Myōe's life, when (like Van Gogh) he cut off his own ear. This examination opens up the discourse of deformity, class, and transgression – one that has evocative similarities with the Indian Buddhist identity of being outside of the caste system.

Abé's analysis reveals that Myōe's action is rhetorically over-determined. First, there is the tradition of the perfection of giving (Skt. *dānapāramitā*), in which the bodhisattva offers up his body for the benefit of other living beings, as recounted in many Jātaka tales. There is also then the model of "great teachers of the past" who in their single-minded pursuit of the dharma cut off that which made them most proud – literally cutting off noses, arms, legs, ears, or gouging out eyes. Myōe contrasted this behavior with that of his contemporaries who carefully shaved their heads to make them shine, and who concerned themselves with the variegated colors of their robes.

Behind these traditional exemplars from the range of Buddhist moral discourse, Abé also points to the social value of Myōe severing his ear, a condition that symbolically equated Myōe with criminals in medieval Japan. This symbolically transformed Myōe into a *hinin*, a non-person, someone who stood not only outside the social system of his time, but also outside the institutional systems of medieval Buddhism in Japan. There was a certain ambivalence in this, however, for because *hinin* were already considered to be polluted, they were able to serve to remove pollution. Thus, through a logic of reversal, Myōe's deformity becomes the means for him to fulfill his bodhisattva vows of serving all living beings, and literally to minister to those not usually accepted in medieval Japanese society. Myōe manipulates the social discourses of body, pollution, deformity, and status for the sake of his own religious goals. Out of these complex discursive threads – both religious and social – we can read Myōe's body and his act of self-disfigurement as a religious "text."

Jacqueline Stone shifts our attention from the esoteric Shingon threads of medieval Japanese Buddhism – as discussed by Rambelli, Payne, Unno, and Abé – to the language of the *Lotus Sūtra* and its understanding in medieval Japanese Tendai, and the notions of original enlightenment (Jpn. *hongaku*). "'Not Mere Written Words': Perspectives on the Language of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Medieval Japan" does demonstrate, however, the pervasive quality of the pansemiotic épistéme identified by Rambelli in relation to the *Reikiki*, and which Payne links back to Indic theories of language. The *Lotus Sūtra*'s self-referential discourse raises the text itself to the level of being interchangeable with the Buddha Śākyamuni – perhaps an indication of the ongoing importance of the issue of the absence of the Buddha following his *mahāparinirvāṇa* in the formation of Mahāyāna.[48] The text also served a performative function as described by Rambelli, being recited and transcribed for various purposes other than understanding the conceptual content of the text. Stone notes, however, that the text of the *Lotus Sūtra* itself does not argue for its liberative potency on the grounds of a theory of its own language. Looking, however, at the medieval Japanese discourses on the power of the *Lotus Sūtra*, she finds three kinds of arguments that express conceptions of religious language.

The first of these three arguments concerns the ontological status of language found in scripture. The second has to do with the relation between the text and insights gained as a consequence of practice. Last, the power of the *Lotus Sūtra* was such that the words of the text were thought to instill buddhahood into insentient objects, such as statues. In Stone's hands these three arguments reveal for us doctrinal, institutional, and ritual contexts within which discourse about language took place in medieval Japanese Buddhism. The question of the relation between religious truth and the linguistic expression of that truth discussed by Payne in the context of Indic philosophy of religion was an issue for medieval Tendai thinkers as well.

Stone notes that the mainstream position was that meditative insight and scriptural study reveal the same truth.

Continuing examination of the *Lotus Sūtra* in medieval Japan, Taigen Dan Leighton examines the influence of that work on Dōgen's discursive style. Although the Zen slogan about a transmission outside the scriptures might lead one to imagine that Dōgen is not connected with the *Lotus Sūtra*, in fact his early training as a Tendai monk on Hieizan (common to many of the medieval innovators) means that he was quite familiar with the text. While acknowledging the variety of sources that Dōgen utilized, including *kōan* collections and the traditions of Japanese poetry, Leighton notes that Dōgen lavishly extolled the *Lotus Sūtra*, drew on it for doctrinal elements, and also directly alluded to the *Lotus Sūtra*'s familiar parables. Rather than simply compiling a catalogue of allusions to the text found in the works of Dōgen, Leighton focuses on the more subtle stylistic influences.

As noted above (and by others previously), the *Lotus Sūtra* has a strong tendency to be self-referential – so much so that it may be considered a prime example of an empty signifier. Leighton finds a similar pattern in some of Dōgen's dharma hall discourses (Jpn. *jōdō*), examining two of these closely. This self-referential or self-reflexive character can also be seen as an instance of skillful means (Jpn. *hōben*, Skt. *upāya*). From this perspective the *Lotus Sūtra* is seen as an open text, one that can be inclusive and pluralistic, rather than the more commonly found exclusivistic and hierarchic interpretation that sees the teaching of the one vehicle (Skt. *ekayāna*) as displacing that of the three vehicles. Visionary, dream, and fantastic imagery constitute a third connection between the *Lotus Sūtra* and Dōgen's writings, also connecting him with Myōe, as discussed by Abé and Unno in this collection.[49] In some of Dōgen's works he employs parables comparable to those of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The variety of rhetorical devices found in Dōgen's corpus can be traced to the discursive style of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Steven Heine also examines the works of Dōgen, turning specifically to the hermeneutic strategies that Dōgen employs in his exegesis of *kōans*. According to Heine, during the early period following his return from China, as Dōgen was introducing this genre to Japan, Dōgen's interpretations were not particularly unique. However, Dōgen did go on to develop a number of rhetorical and narrative strategies that allowed him to create interpretations of *kōans* that met his own needs, and that were fairly radical innovations on previous commentaries. Heine identifies two of Dōgen's approaches as "atomization" and the development of the traditional genre of "capping phrases." The first involves breaking down key passages of the narrative of the *kōan* and rearranging them into new meanings. Capping phrases are "brief, pithy, and allusive commentaries on particular words or passages." As Heine indicates, Dōgen sometimes uses these processes of interpretation to demythologize supernatural elements found in *kōan* narratives, although at times Dōgen also retains these elements.

Heine's discussions of specific *kōans* show how Dōgen sometimes uses his interpretations to support didactic concerns; for example, about the importance of attention to everyday activity in his monastic training context. Other interpretive innovations by Dōgen in specific *kōans* reveal more metaphysical concerns, such as expressing his radical understanding of nonduality. Such nonduality is often only implicit and not fully developed in the original *kōan* and commentaries, before their "turning" by Dōgen.

Like Dōgen, Shinran also engaged in creative hermeneutic strategies. Eisho Nasu examines the origins of these strategies in the styles of exegesis developed in the Eshin-ryū of Tendai. As Nasu demonstrates, such projects do not exist in isolation from the social and political settings of their time. He first sets out the doctrinal conflicts within which not only Shinran, but also several of Hōnen's other senior disciples, wrote works in defense of his key work, the *Senjakushū*. Although the persecution of the nascent Pure Land movement during Hōnen's lifetime is well known, Nasu demonstrates the impact of another persecution. This latter persecution took place in 1227, fifteen years after Hōnen's death, and is known as the Karoku persecution after the name of the reign era. While Shinran had already been working on his own work, the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, the Karoku persecution came at the time that he was finishing his compilation. Because other disciples of Hōnen responded to the persecution by compromising on the strong "sole practice" position that Hōnen had promoted, Shinran felt compelled to sharpen this position, making his the most radical interpretation. Through the perspectives of language, rhetoric, textuality, and semiotics, discourse can be viewed as the site of contestation and, therefore, transformation of the tradition. Different sects attempted to control the discourse in such a fashion as to promote their own positions. However, even when there were not intentional attempts to control the discourse, the underlying and even unconscious transformation of the tradition is reflected in changes in the discourse. Furthermore, individual or unique religious transformations with new developments of perspective are recorded through shifting uses of discourse.

The examples of shifting discourse presented in this book offer a survey of the important role of discourse in medieval Japanese Buddhism. Participants in medieval Japanese religion used a range of approaches to discourse and language to express or encourage innovations, and the new religious phenomena, in turn, provoked shifts in discourse and rhetoric. The essays in this book pose just the beginning of a potentially rich area for further study with the capacity to develop our understanding of Japanese Buddhism in this critical period, and its shifts in modes of conveying religious truth and faith.

Other areas for discourse study in medieval Japanese Buddhism deserve fresh inquiry. For example, explorations of pilgrimage and sacred sites may reveal them as realms of discourse. Texts as iconic objects of veneration pose a useful prospect for further discourse study. And the performance of

rituals and ceremonies may be explored as oral discourse modes. The essays herein only begin to delve into a range of schools and movements, from traditional schools such as Hosso, Kegon, Shingon, and Tendai, to pioneers of new movements such as Dōgen, Shinran, and Nichiren. Other movements, including Rinzai Zen, the construction of the Gozan and other monastic institutions, and other Pure Land movements such as the Jōdo-shū and Jishū schools, merit discourse study. It is our sincere hope that this volume will inspire further studies into transformation of discourse and other language usage in all these areas.

Notes

1 A wide use of the term "medieval" (roughly from 1100 to 1400) is intended to avoid the all too familiar historical categories, such as the Kamakura or Muromachi eras, which imply greater coherence within an era, and narrower periods of transformation from one era to another, than actually existed.

2 Kocku von Stuckrad, "Discursive Study of Religion: From States of Mind to Communication and Action," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 15.3 (2003), pp. 255–271.

3 Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 5.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Miyazaki Fumiko and Duncan Williams, "The Intersection of the Local and Translocal at a Sacred Site: The Case of Osorezan in Tokugawa Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, special issue on "Local Religion in Tokugawa History," Barbara Ambros and Duncan Williams, eds, 28/3–4 (Fall 2001), pp. 399–440.

7 See Richard K. Payne, "Introduction," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, Richard K. Payne, ed., Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 11, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.

8 Robert F. Berkhofer Jr, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 126.

9 For an argument that orienting commitments are an unavoidable part of writing history, and that failure to recognize them is self-deluding, see Robert Eric Frykenberg, *History and Belief: The Foundations of Historical Understanding*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, in cooperation with The Institute for Advanced Christian Studies, 1996, pp. 314–315. Personally, however, I find unconvincing Frykenberg's presumption that (postmodern) critics of "traditional" historiography believe themselves to be unbiased and lacking in critical self-reflection. Indeed, most responsible practitioners are quite aware of the reflexive implications of a concern with social location.

10 Wuthnow, p. 6.

11 Ibid., p. 538. For a critique of the concept of "practice," see the works of Stephen Turner, *The Social Theory of Practices: Tradition, Tacit Knowledge, and Presuppositions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, and id., *Brains/Practices/Relativism: Social Theory after Cognitive Science*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

12 Wuthnow, p. 539.

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., p. 540.
15 This kind of teleological presumption can also be seen in the way that Needham formulated the underlying question of his massive *Science and the Civilization of China* series: why did China not develop modern, experimental science in the same way that Europe had?
16 The term "praxis" is used here to mean the interrelation between concepts or doctrines and actions or practices. For further on this usage, see Richard K. Payne, "Introduction," in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka, eds, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004, pp. 3–5.
17 Kocku von Stuckrad traces this turn to the use of the phrase "discursive study of religion" by Hans G. Kippenberg in 1983. See von Stuckrad, p. 266.
18 They remain part of the conceptual scope, although not highlighted – since taken all together they would have made this work's title too long.
19 See discussion of "retrospective historiography" in Payne, "Introduction," *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, pp. 3–5.
20 Pascal Boyer, "Cognitive Constraints on Cultural Representations: Natural Ontologies and Religious Ideas," in *Mapping the Mind: Domain specificity in cognition and culture*, Lawrence A. Hirschfeld and Susan A. Gelman, eds, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 394.
21 See Robert H. Sharf, "Experience," in *Critical Terms in Religious Studies*, Mark C. Taylor, ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, and reprinted as "The Rhetoric of Experience and the Study of Religion," in *Cognitive Models and Spiritual Maps*, Jensine Andresen and Robert K. C. Forman, eds, special issue of *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7, 11/12 (Nov./Dec. 2000), Bowling Green, OH: Imprint Academic.
22 Fabio Rambelli, "'Just Behave as You Like; Prohibitions and Impurities Are not a Problem': Radical Amida Cults and Popular Religiosity in Premodern Japan," in Payne and Tanaka, eds, pp. 169–201.
23 Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual and Classification*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 172.
24 See Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.
25 Lincoln, p. 174.
26 von Stuckrad, pp. 268–269.
27 Ibid., p. 266.
28 Ibid.
29 Kathryn A. Woolard, "Introduction: Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry," in *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, Bambi B. Schieffelin, Kathryn A. Woolard, and Paul V. Kroskrity, eds, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 5.
30 Ibid., p. 6.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 7.
33 Ibid. See in this connection Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-century France*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, and James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985, and id., *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.

34 Woolard, p. 7.
35 Slavoj Žižek, *Mapping Ideology*, London: Verso, 1994, pp. 10–11.
36 Ibid., p. 12.
37 Ibid., pp. 12–13.
38 See, for example, David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988.
39 Žižek, p. 15.
40 Göran Therborn, *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology*, London: Verso, 1980, p. 2.
41 Rambelli, "'Just Behave as You Like'," p. 194.
42 Lincoln, p. 73.
43 Ibid., p. 172.
44 Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, Paris: Seuil, 1982. Among other instances of discussions of textuality, see, for example, Harvey Whitehouse's examination of the relation between performance, orality and textuality in his work on Melanesia, *Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. See also, Jack Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000.
45 Paul Groner, "Shortening the Path: Early Tendai Interpretations of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body (*Sokushin Jōbutsu*)," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, Robert E. Buswell Jr, and Robert M. Gimello, eds, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, p. 439.
46 Rambelli, p. 171.
47 Groner, pp. 439–473.
48 Paul Harrison, *The* Samādhi *of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present*, Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series, V, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990, and id., "Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānusmṛti*" in *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, Janet Gyatso, ed., Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. See also Malcolm David Eckel, *To See the Buddha: A Philosopher's Quest for the Meaning of Emptiness*, 1992, reprint, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
49 See also George Tanabe's discussion of visions in his *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*, Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, and Harvard University Press, 1992.

2

METAPHOR AND THEORY OF CULTURAL CHANGE

In search of skillful means for understanding Kamakura Buddhism

Dale S. Wright

Imagine a hypothetical conference on Japanese Buddhism held in California forty years ago. What might such a conference have taken as its theme? Certainly not "language and discourse." That would have seemed an insufficiently prominent topic for scholars to address. More likely it would have addressed the "religious beliefs" of Kamakura Buddhists, the concepts themselves rather than their linguistic medium. The topic "language and discourse in Kamakura Buddhism" shows the intellectual tendencies and interests of our time. We suspect, in other words, unlike our ancestors in earlier eras, that attunement to the language and the discursive practices of a culture will show us something fundamental about it.

What is the difference between analysis of language and analysis of beliefs? Our answer today would be "very little," but no such answer would have been persuasive to our hypothetical conference participants forty years ago. In that earlier era, intellectuals would have maintained a strict separation between the ideas or beliefs of a religion and the language in which they happened to be expressed. Language theory in our time, however, raises doubts about the viability of making such a distinction, concluding instead that language and concepts are for all practical purposes inseparable. The "linguistic turn" in contemporary thought invites us to reconsider language as the very fabric of meaning rather than as its incidental cover or medium. While our earlier conference colleagues might have talked about how language "clothes" and "conveys" meaning, we are more likely to take an interest in how it structures and constitutes meaning.

In order to locate more precisely the particular dimension of linguistic theory addressed in this chapter, I begin with a very general thesis about cultural transformation. There are, I claim, essentially three ways in which cultural change in the form of alteration of patterns of thinking can be

prompted. These are novel experience, inferential reasoning, and metaphorical extension.[1] Although my claim is that these three mechanisms are valid at both the individual and social levels – that is, these are the three ways in which you as an individual and the whole culture in which you live undergo change of mind – I focus primarily on the larger issue of how whole cultures like Kamakura Japan move through the currents of impermanence.

In the first instance, cultural change may be precipitated by cultural contact, the arrival of some new artifact, or new idea, or line of reasoning. This can take the form of importation from another culture, or the discovery of something new. It is simply the appearance of something with which a culture has no experience, and for which it has no standard explanation or intellectual niche, something truly novel and temporarily either uncategorized or uncategorizable. The most dramatic Japanese example of this kind of unprecedented encounter would be the arrival of Chinese culture in the early centuries of the common era, which clearly altered the fabric of Japanese society forever. During that period, Japanese people came into contact with forms of culture that could only be accounted for by a fundamental revision of the language and practices of that society – forms of music, explanation, politics, artifacts, tools, and on and on, that were not containable or subsumable within the systems of understanding already in place in Japan. Later periods, of course, received waves of new influence, and the distinctive character of the Kamakura period would have to be understood in terms of these inheritances. Coming under the influence of some previously unknown form of culture is the most common impetus for change in both societies and individuals.

However, in the second instance, transformation in understanding may occur without this sort of direct influence, but as the result of internal thinking or inferential reasoning. In such cases, a culture might begin to notice a logical inconsistency between two ideas or cultural forms that had previously gone unnoticed, or some level of tension between a firmly held belief and a longstanding practice. Or one might come to conclude that a seemingly indispensable belief of one sort would also entail commitment to another related belief that on its own would not have been compelling. Change in this case consists in a transformative reconciliation, the overcoming of reflective tension through inferential reasoning. As long as no one noticed the tension between them, it was possible for Japanese Buddhists to simultaneously maintain both that practitioners already have the buddha-nature and that awakening entails a fundamental transformation brought about by rigorous practice. Once the tension between these two beliefs is experienced, however, experimentation might begin on various forms of logical reconciliation. Tension is commonly released either through denunciation of one or the other of the doctrines, or through subtle forms of redefinition, as is often found, for example, in the literary genre of allegory. Dōgen and other Kamakura Buddhists began to see that commonly held beliefs about buddha-nature and those about practice

possessed clear but contradictory implications for each other, so much so that reconciliation would in the end require that both clusters of concepts be reconceived in fundamental ways.

These first two ways in which culture can change do not necessitate any transformation in the language that structures the culture's worldview. In these two cases a culture's understanding is altered either by having to take something new into consideration or by realizing that what has been previously understood begs the transformative intrusion of inferential logic. The third and final means of cultural change occurs through a transformation in language, and the primary vehicle of such change is metaphor. In the remainder of this chapter, I summarize current theoretical reflection on the significance and workings of metaphor, and suggest ways in which these theories might prove useful in an effort to understand the kinds of religious and cultural change that prevailed in Kamakura Buddhism.

One reason why metaphor has received so much attention in the past few decades of cultural theory is the realization that metaphor is the place within language where language expands and grows, thus making possible new forms of culture that come to articulation within it. This realization is itself a cultural change of significant proportions, and its ramifications are only now beginning to be felt in a variety of academic fields. For the most part, in the history of Western culture, metaphor has been relegated to the domain of linguistic ornamentation as one means among several to bring greater beauty into one's speech or writing. Metaphor was thus a poetic or imaginative device, a tool of rhetorical flourish.

Although contemporary thinkers do not agree on how to understand the cultural and linguistic function of metaphor, uniformly they reject this traditional understanding of metaphor as mere ornamentation, placing it instead at the center of the creative functions of language. Metaphor, they claim, makes possible "semantic disclosure," the phrase given by contemporary linguists to this capacity of metaphor to open up new ways of conceiving the world or our place in it. Possibilities for cultural activity are continually being enlarged and transformed by the shape of the language in which we do the thinking and acting. Metaphor is, in Ricoeur's words, the place in language where we are beckoned to "think more," to extend our understanding and to transform our culture, whether in the arts or in science.[2] If the Kamakura period was indeed a time in which religious thinking entered a period of profound creativity, a time when one set of cultural forms gave way to innovative modes of understanding and practice, then on this contemporary account of language and discourse we could expect that one thing we might find in the religious language of that time is the eruption of new metaphors functioning to turn the minds of those who spoke the language of that era in some new direction.

In an effort to provide both evidence and reasoning for attributing this level of cultural importance to metaphor, the remainder of the chapter makes

a series of six thesis-like claims – with examples – about the function of metaphor and the ways in which it evokes cultural change.

First, by way of definition, metaphor is the prototypical way in which we understand one kind of thing in terms of another. So when we say that "time is money," or that "God is love," or that "life is suffering," or that "form is emptiness," we have, evoking the linguistic power of metaphor, understood one thing in light of another quite different thing. I have called metaphor "prototypical" because in fact every time we understand anything we always do so in relation to something else; so metaphor is certainly not the only way relation enters the process of understanding.[3] Just as we recognize that all words in the dictionary are defined in terms of other words, Buddhists recognized that all things come to be only in relation to other things. Nevertheless, metaphor is the most noticeable of our relational linguistic structures because one requirement of metaphor is that the two things placed in relation to each other must be fundamentally different in kind. Metaphor suggests an analogical relation between the meaning of a word in its normal context and some new and different context into which it has been introduced. Although one or more connotations of a word are transferred into a new context by a metaphor, not all connotations apply. The transfer is therefore "highly selective."[4] Certain analogical associations provide the content in terms of which the new subject is understood. While certain features are emphasized or distinctively arranged, others are suppressed or ignored.

Second, although considerable controversy attends the issue of how exactly to understand metaphor, some consensus surrounds the idea that metaphor is an extension of the previous boundaries of language, a reaching out of some sort on the surface of language. At this point, two metaphors can help us to cultivate this sense of metaphor. First, Richard Rorty thinks of metaphor as "the growing point of language," the place within language where some form of self-transcendence occurs.[5] Second, a metaphor common to several interpreters claims that metaphor is the "dreamwork of language," the unconscious productive activity that extends the workings of the mind. It is in this sense that Ricoeur calls metaphor a spark of imagination, an intrusion upon language demanding novel interpretation and requiring us to think what has not yet been thought.[6] There is an important sense in which metaphors are not consciously made or created; instead they occur to us, dawn on us, pop out of – or into – our minds. Metaphor shows us clearly the freedom of language to develop in unlimited and unforeseeable ways. It makes imagination or creativity rather than truth as correspondence or accuracy the primary locus of our attention.

Third, several interpreters of metaphor maintain that the first appearances of a new metaphor lack meaning (where meaning is a function of common socio-cultural exchange of understanding) because they are not intentional as much as suggestions that rise up unconsciously in our minds, suggestions

about as yet unreflected connections between a set of connotations in one thing in their application to something else. A new metaphor, therefore, is something like an unexpected intrusion into the network of meaning that is already established, "a voice from outside logical space."[7] Think of "shouting and hitting," or the Zen *katsu* when it was startling and new, before it assumed a predictable place in the vocabulary of Zen monastic practice. In those initial instances, it had no meaning, was uninterpretable, outlandish and shocking, bizarre and meaningless. So new and out of place, they have no place in an established system of meaning.

Donald Davidson insists, therefore, that metaphors do not have a second meaning in addition to their literal meaning.[8] They have only literal meanings and if the metaphor is successful over time in fitting itself into the discursive practices of a language community then the process simply extends the repertoire of literal meanings available to its citizens. For Davidson, metaphor "belongs exclusively to the domain of use"[9] rather than linguistic meaning, and it is the use of metaphor that injects new possibilities for meaning into a language over time. Therefore, lacking an already established meaning, we can think of it as producing an effect, where the effect over time is to construct a meaning that did not previously exist. When it first emerges, a metaphor can only be savored or pondered or cultivated until it either finds a place within the language system by being repeated and played with, or is forgotten and left behind. Language users do with metaphor what they do with anomalous experience – they either reject it as meaningless and unworthy of attention, or they rework their network of understanding to include a place for it. We deal with a new metaphor by redefining words, which has the additional effect of forcing us to reweave the fibers of our understanding to accommodate the extension beyond our previous structure of meaning.[10]

Fourth, metaphors accumulate meaning through repeated use, and at a certain point cease to function as metaphors. Or to put it differently, new metaphors are alive with the ability to have an effect, but as this effect is taken into a language their metaphorical character dies off, and they become normal meanings rather than metaphors. We do not, for example, need to reflect upon the word "reflection" in order to understand this sentence, just as we don't have to think about what it means to "stand under" anything to understand the word "understanding." These metaphors are no longer living; they have died as metaphors to become meanings that will be found in the minds of all users of that language just as they would be found in all standard dictionaries. Previously startling metaphors die off into literal meanings, which then serve as platforms or foundations from which new metaphors spring forth. This is the sense in which Derrida, in his famous essay "White Mythology,"[11] claims that all concepts begin as metaphor, and all the concepts that are used to define metaphorical meaning were once themselves metaphorical, such that there is no original literal base from

which metaphor has developed. The generative energy of metaphor is therefore ongoing and endless, there being no end to the process of generating new creative bursts and no *a priori* schema that limits the scope of this form of linguistic creativity.

Occasionally metaphors arise that do not fit into the reigning scheme of beliefs about the world as they intrude upon that scheme by casting unusual light on the word and encouraging the viewer to think differently. Something like this idea of intrusion is necessary to explain how a culture or an individual comes to undergo radical rather than ordinary change. Most change is nonintrusive and largely invisible because it fits into and is accommodated by the system of understanding already in place. It alters that system but in incremental ways. But if metaphor is capable of intruding on that scheme then we have one possible cause for large-scale change in the fabric of understanding.

Intellectual historians look back at certain seminal events as precursors to conceptual revolution where not just one way of understanding something changed, but the whole fabric of understanding changed. If metaphor is a way of casting light on things that is extendable to the whole of understanding then we can see in it the potential for this kind of revolutionary large-scale change. This fits with the idea that the changes that they bring are not simply adjustments in the scheme of things as they are; instead they call for revision from the ground up, as when China became Confucian or when all of East Asia came under the powerful sway of Buddhism. Changes of this magnitude are not as much the results of debates and the influence of arguments as they are linguistic sea changes that gradually sink in and sweep through the language practices of the society as a whole. When this level of change occurs old intellectual problems and issues are not as much resolved as dissolved; that is, made to seem irrelevant in the new dispensation.

Mary Hesse's definition of scientific revolutions as "metaphoric redescriptions"[12] is helpful in thinking about other domains of culture as well. Cultural revolutions would entail a similar pattern of dependence on a group of people revising their language in such a way that they come to see their situations in the world on very different terms. Recent scholarly attention to the continuities between Heian and Kamakura Japan and corresponding efforts to rethink the revolutionary sense of change in the Kamakura are important qualifications to the earlier tendency to see this period as having broken decisively with the foregoing era. There is no reason to assume, for example, that political change necessitates change in other cultural domains, or that cultural change follows the same political patterns no matter what dimension of culture is at stake. Historical periodization is probably best characterized individually in each domain of culture, with attention to interconnection between spheres but not identity between them. But interpenetration of dimensions is a powerful factor in cultural change. If, for

example, we characterize the primary change in Kamakura Buddhism by locating it in religious practice, as an alteration of means, then it would be important for us to look at how this change in "means" might have given rise to altered conceptions of the religious goal. The Kamakura emphasis on exclusive means, for example, must have had some bearing over time on the conception of ends, how the point of Buddhist practice was imagined.

Historical theory now provides models that allow for astounding levels of complexity and interdependency of factors. Actual political or economic or linguistic change may bring about change in one of the other dimensions, each in its own way providing a turn in the sense people get about their overall situation in the world. But since language runs through all cultural domains, none more so than religion, linguistic and discursive change is the most telling condition for larger cultural transformation. Metaphor, I claim, is the primary instrument for this kind of social transformation. Nietzsche's definition of truth as a "mobile army of metaphors" is a productive image in this vein. New metaphors on occasion reshape our thinking processes so radically that we cease taking up old questions altogether, dropping them in favor of a new set of issues that are suddenly compelling and that now direct our thinking and acting in new ways. For Mary Hesse, a whole constellation of social factors sets the stage for the appearance of potent metaphors, which once set in motion make certain subjects of conversation seem important and others fade into obscurity. A "mobile army of metaphors" can easily be pictured sweeping through a cultural group, jumping from the mind and discourse of one creative or influential person into the minds of others and circulating out from there into the society at large.

Fifth, the most powerful and provocative metaphors develop in a systematic way, spinning off ever more extensive uses of the root metaphor. Systemic metaphors are therefore well worth special attentiveness in the study of historic texts or historical periods. Let me provide an example in modern English. While many of us might react negatively now to the metaphor "time is money," denying that we do in fact conceive of time through its analogies to our financial world, a study of our everyday linguistic practices would belie that denial. All of us think in terms of *wasting* and *saving* time, *giving* our time and *spending* our time, *investing* our time, *running out* of time, and *budgeting* our time. We *borrow* time, use time *profitably*, and think hard about whether an activity is *worth* our time. Time is a *valuable commodity*, a *limited resource*, something that we ought not to *squander.* We get paid hourly or weekly or monthly or annually; our phone bill comes in units of time and we pay our mortgage over set periods of time. When our ill-conceived deeds *cost* the society, we *repay* the *debt* by *serving* time. We could extend these conceptions almost indefinitely because the metaphor "time is money" now so deeply pervades our mind and language that it is hard to imagine it otherwise. But it *was* indeed otherwise; in other historical epochs and in other cultures the idea that "time is money" would make no

sense whatsoever. It is now, however, a metaphor whose influence is – for better or worse – reaching out into other cultures and taking hold in languages far from its European base. Money is certainly not the only way to conceptualize time, but it is now a dominant metaphor that has far reaching and systematic consequences for the way we live our lives, all, by the way, largely unbeknownst to us.[13]

Since we rarely or barely notice ways in which systematic linguistic structures shape our own experience of the world, it is a daunting challenge to seek to uncover the linguistic basis of conceptual structure in another language of another era like Kamakura Buddhism. Nevertheless, the lucrative benefits of such a study are becoming increasingly clear. Here are a few suggestions for where we might look in Buddhist texts.

One metaphoric domain that was rich in conceptual influence and highly developed was the image of the *dao*, a path, a way, an avenue for travel and movement. Beginning in ancient China, this metaphor grew over centuries of East Asian culture to the point where it now pervades everything from spiritual quest to scientific and technical discourse. Buddhist minds produced countless variants; different "paths" were linked to distinct means of spiritual journey, different *upāyas* (skillful means). The religious enterprise then took the mental form of a journey along a path. Participants were encouraged to "follow the path," to seek a guide or teacher, to avoid evil paths, to seek appropriate "gates" (Jpn. *mon*) along the path. The path could be characterized as wide or narrow, as steep or winding, as easy or difficult, as requiring one's own power or that of another. One could follow the path of reason (Jpn. *dōri*) or the path of meditation, and a variety of vehicles were available upon which practitioners could ride, all subsumable, from some points of view, by the "one vehicle" (Jpn. *ichijō*).

Confucian familial metaphors structured thinking about many dimensions of East Asian society. For Buddhists, the root metaphor came over time to be: the *saṅgha* is a family. Once this was fully established, it became natural to understand every dimension of monastic social life in terms of clan images; there were relations of uncle and cousin and nephew between monks and their patterns of interaction were modeled over those in the traditional Chinese family. Moreover, the sense of lineage and genealogy inherent in Chinese family structure eventually emerged in the monasteries, so much so that no East Asian sect of Buddhism lacked a full outline of inheritance and legacy. Therefore, when Dōgen referred to the "vital artery of buddhas and patriarchs" (Jpn. *busso no meimyaku*) the intermixing of physiological metaphors with genealogical metaphors was already a firmly established custom.[14]

Agricultural metaphors can be found throughout Kamakura Buddhist texts, as well as other East Asian texts. That other dimensions of life would come to be understood through images of farming should not be surprising. Given the sophistication of this vocabulary in East Asia, a wide variety

of words for "cultivating," "tending," and "nurturing" come to be found in Buddhist discourse. Drawing also upon the earlier Indian use of the image of "seeds" (Skt. *bīja*), we find a wide range of references to seeds planted in the mind or heart, seeds of virtue or merit, that if properly cultivated could be expected to grow and to yield spiritual nourishment and wealth. Nichiren, for example, thought of the title of the *Lotus Sūtra* (Jpn. *daimoku*) as a seed, one requiring disciplined cultivation to be sure, but nonetheless a seed of infinite value. The concept of "roots" was equally lucrative in providing images for understanding, including everything from the "roots of virtue" to the "root" as the very basis of reality.

Economic metaphors were also pervasive. Images of "debt" and "reward" were abundantly useful, as were those of "saving" or salvation, merit "gained" and "lost" and "wasted." These continue to proliferate today in the religious economy of Japan.

Political, administrative, and military metaphors can also be found behind the development of a wide variety of concepts. No doubt these began with the metaphor of the "law" (Skt. *dharma*) and the seriousness of "breaking" the precepts of the rules of the order (Skt. *vinaya*). But they developed from that base to include an astounding range of systematic reference. Even in so far removed a domain as meditation, we can find the workings of these metaphors, as, for example, in various conceptions of "regulating the mind" (Jpn. *choshin*).

Sixth, we have seen that simple root metaphors develop systematically to form coherent structural systems in terms of which the experience of language users is constructed. More than occasionally, however, exceptions to this coherence can be found. A simple example of this in East Asia is the way in which transcendence is located in terms of special metaphors. In Jōdo-shū and Nichiren-shū devotionalism, "height" is often the preferred metaphor of transcendence. The buddha or the sūtra is placed high on the altar, above the ordinary. The residence of deity is envisioned as high above the earth, distant in space from the mundane world in which his image is only remotely seen. At other times in these same Buddhist traditions, and often in Zen, the transcendent is deep rather than high. This image tends to fit more coherently with images of what is close at hand, where the transcendent is sometimes pictured as closer to the practitioner than any object at hand. These contrasting metaphors are so common that they can be used interchangeably in the same text, and read without anyone noticing the discrepancy. In these cases, the concept of the transcendent is all that much more complex, requiring the juxtaposition of several inconsistent images to produce a concept of transcendence of sufficient profundity. They are tied together, of course, by the fact that they are images of the same thing – the buddha, or principle – yet distinct in that they encourage the practitioner's mind to move in quite opposite directions in forming the requisite concept. Whenever, then, we can locate this kind of metaphoric inconsistency, we

have found a domain where the concepts generated by the opposing metaphors are particularly complex and wide-ranging.

The overall view of language presupposed in this way of looking at metaphor stands in contrast to the opposite one, which conceives of language as a barrier interceding between self and world. This latter view is very common, however, and it is worth characterizing the difference briefly. Wherever language is imagined as a medium of communication that applies categories and concepts to the experienced world that is otherwise encountered directly and on its own, a kind of dualism is posited that cannot help but cast negative light on language in two respects. The first is that language is located in a limited role, as a medium for communication but not in the more pervasive dimensions of perception and conception. The second is that the metaphors for language that develop in this vein cast it in the role of intermediary, an obstacle to direct and true experience. Language is, in this respect, a "veil," a "lens," a "filter," a "reflection" of what can otherwise be experienced directly and without mediation. The modern image of this is the veil of appearance, so natural and obvious a metaphor that it captivated the minds of early Greek philosophers and Indian gurus.

Anti-essentialist and non-dualistic ways of thinking in contemporary thought – as well as in some forms of Buddhist thought – offer another way to conceive of the role of language as an enabling rather than an obstructing factor. Language makes possible not just communicating about the world as we experience it, but also the experience itself in both perception and conception. We perceive that world already in language and understand our perceptions in terms of concepts that are also already linguistically structured. On this model, language is not simply a means of communication. It enables or makes possible the kinds of complex experience that we have, and distinguishes the way we understand any kind of thing from the way animals do. The contemporary realization that language is historical – that is, that it changes continually through time – opens up the possibility for us to recognize that modes of experience, understanding, and culture are more thoroughly impermanent than our Buddhist ancestors may have ever recognized. This would be to say that as language changes so do possibilities for ways of living. And if my thesis that metaphor is the place where language undergoes its most radical and creative change is correct, then metaphor is where we might expect new forms of understanding and enlightenment to appear, just as they once did in the Japanese language of Kamakura Buddhism.

Notes

1 These three ways of cultural transformation are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They may operate simultaneously, or in some manner of juxtaposition and mutual influence.

2 Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.
3 Joel Weinsheimer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics and Literary Theory*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991.
4 Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell Unversity Press, 1962.
5 Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
6 Ricoeur, p. 303.
7 Ibid., p. 13.
8 Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, pp. 246–7.
9 Ibid., p. 247.
10 On the creation of new meaning through metaphor, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. 145.
11 Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
12 Mary Hesse, *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.
13 Throughout this paragraph I have drawn heavily from Lakoff and Johnson's chapter entitled "The Systematicity of Metaphorical Concepts."
14 Carl Bielefeldt, *Dogen's Manuals of Zen Meditation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, p. 168.

3

THE *SANGOKU-MAPPŌ* CONSTRUCT

Buddhism, nationalism, and history in medieval Japan

Mark L. Blum

Among the many changes that appear in the Buddhist world during the medieval period is a change in historical consciousness of Japan as a Buddhist nation. This chapter looks at expressions of historico-religious consciousness within Buddhist discourse and specifically at how these relate to notions of national identity. It bears mentioning that the relative impact of the writers discussed below cannot always be ascertained with confidence, and one could use this argument to assert that merely the existence of this or that linguistic expression about this issue is no indication that such expressions dominated the overall discourse. On the other hand, taken as a group we have a series of varied and articulate statements on the meaning of history for Japanese Buddhism that, I think it is safe to say, formed the basic rhetoric for discussing this issue as evidenced in sectarian scholarship of the Tokugawa and Meiji periods.

When a nation begins to write histories of religion that extend beyond its borders, as any historical expression of Buddhism must for Japan, the thorny issue of national identity inevitably comes to the fore. Is Japan just one more Buddhist nation among many, and should we take pride in the fact that we are an "equal" partner to, say, China? What does it mean that our Buddhist institutions, our "schools," derive largely – if not entirely – from Chinese or Indian sources? Or is all this extra-national precedent to be understood as a historical buildup to a kind of plateau of realization – a historical epiphany, if you will – wherein Japan's role as the destiny of Buddhism's march eastward is somehow fulfilled? In this view, not only is Japan's uniqueness stressed, but Buddhism is used as a foil to rationalize it.

The history of historical writings on Buddhism up through the medieval period in Japan begins with Saichō and probably culminates with the Zen

monk Kokan Shiren (1278–1346). But some of the clearer statements about the meaning of Buddhist history in terms of Japanese history come from Saichō, Keikai, Gomyō, Annen, Yōsai, the *Mappō tōmyōki*, Kakuken, Jien, Nichiren, and Gyōnen. Excluding Nichiren, who has been exhaustively studied on this point,[1] I briefly outline the "positions" or "views" of how Japanese Buddhism is to be defined in a historical context in these writers. Among these writers, it is arguably the rhetoric of Saichō, Annen, and Gyōnen that enjoyed the most lasting impact in the world of Buddhist discourse prior to the Meiji Restoration. In the modern period, the premodern influence of the Tendai thinkers (add Jien here) has been well studied for obvious reasons, but it is probably Nichiren's thought that has motivated more people's faith. Although the Kegon school has been extremely small in the modern period, Gyōnen was well published and read in the Meiji period,[2] particularly his historical surveys, and his *Hasshū kōyō* serves as a textbook guide to Japanese Buddhism in seminaries even in the present day.

One of the key concepts that appears in all these writings is that of the "triple-nation" (Jpn. *sangoku*) model of the Buddhist world. By the Kamakura period, *sangoku* has reached canonization as the authoritative expression of what was perceived at that time as the orthodox multinational Buddhist worldview. Herein the known holy world is defined explicitly as India, China, and Japan. It goes without saying that there is much that is excluded in this construction, and while Gyōnen is probably the only figure among this group who recognizes other areas of the Buddhist world (he mentions Korea, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and some Central Asian regions), he nevertheless uses this as the basic frame for his Buddhist histories repeatedly. My guess is that the triple-nation model worked for a number of reasons, but most obviously because India and China were well established centers of religious authority, because they represented two easily identifiable language groups that were both revered in Japan, and because in this formula Japan is placed on an equal footing of authority, exclusive of all other Buddhist nations. It is, of course, exceedingly difficult to ascertain how much geographical knowledge of Asia was present in Japan in the Heian and Kamakura periods, but the exclusion of Korea from this worldview is not to be ignored. This may be explained by the fact that Buddhist scriptures did not come to Japan in a Korean script, and hence Korean culture expressed through the Korean language did not have much of a presence as a mouthpiece for Buddhist truth at this time, unlike the earlier periods of importation in the sixth and seventh centuries.

But complicating our appreciation of the triple-nation concept is that of *mappō* (end of the dharma, Skt. *saddharma vipraloka*, Ch. *mofa*), or some notion of decline of the dharma as it moved over time and space in its crawl from India to Japan. It is worth noting here that the concept of *mofa* as a debated hermeneutic concept in China really begins simultaneously with the arrival of Buddhism in Japan; that is, the late sixth century. In fact some

have argued that this is why Dōji influenced the editor of the *Nihongi* to date the official transmission of Buddhism to Japan as 552, as this was one calculation of the beginning of *mappō*. Thus there essentially is no time, at least no historical time, when Buddhism in Japan is not tainted with some notion of it being in decline. It can be seen in the writings of Zenshu (723–797), a leading Hossō monk of the Nara period who looked to the court to lead the country out of the mud of moral and spiritual weakness resulting from the "final age of the five defilements."[3]

At the popular level as well, in the first real collection of *setsuwa* tales, the *Nihon ryōiki* from the early ninth century, the pessimism of *mappō* is evident. Seen in this context, the historical relationship of Japan to the other two nations in the *sangoku* triad always has an association of Japan being at the end of the chain. The question for these thinkers, then, is what this notion of being last meant historically, or religio-historically. Among them we find some who clearly assert a uniqueness doctrine interestingly similar to the rhetoric of Japanese exceptionalism (Jpn. *nihonjinron*) of the modern period. However, this view of Japan as different is not necessarily always positive, for this special status is noted in some authors as manifest in negative traits, such as lack of respect for the precepts or the *saṅgha* in general. For some, like Jien or Nichiren, Japan has a divinely inspired destiny that reflected both its uniqueness and a potential that seems to transcend what other nations have to offer. My reading of this sentiment is that it is meant to denote China. In other words, India cannot be superseded because this is the home, the national reliquary of the Buddha himself. Japan's real issue is trying to justify its Buddhist tradition *vis-à-vis* China (and perhaps Korea). The triple-nation frame is thus a way for Japan to reach beyond China to touch India directly, a land with which it had no direct contact.

When Myōe Kōben made his mind up to travel to India in the late twelfth century, no Japanese person had ever gone to India and returned. Myōe's ambition was not the first of its kind in Japan, and we may only know about it because he was unusual in writing about himself, but his desire may also reflect an unprecedented degree of Japanese interest in India at the beginning of the Kamakura period. But while notions of Buddhist decline and the understanding that Buddhism came to Japan from India via Chinese civilization were present from the very beginning of its transmission to Japan, it is precisely the time when the Heian period gives way to the Kamakura that what I would like to call the "*sangoku-mappō*" construct really attains prominence as a kind of new historical consciousness. That said, a case can also be made for the thesis that *sangoku* consciousness in Japan was always tied to *mappō* somehow. While not all medieval religious thinkers accept this model, in the late Heian to early Kamakura period it appears that they all react to *sangoku* in one way or another, and most if not all exploit its rich hermeneutic potential. Even Dōgen, as counter-example, uses the term

sangoku but in his assertion that enlightenment through meditation is still very possible. His valorization of his personal lineage as paramount justification of his stance very much suggests that he is expressing a historical consciousness that presumes *mappō*, that calls forth those who are sincere to his way as the only one left in this time of depressed hopes. *Mappō* is thus real for Dōgen; he merely transcends its limitation.

The earliest known written work with *sangoku* in its title was the *Sangoku dentōki* written by Kakuken in 1173. If one compares the setsuwa collections *Nihon ryōiki* and *Konjaku monogatari*, both manifest *mappō* sentiment, but the twelfth-century *Konjaku* distinguishes itself by organizing its stories into distinct *sangoku* categories as Indian, Chinese, and Japanese. Another significant difference between these two works is that while the late eighth-century *Nihon ryōiki* is written in Chinese, Konjaku is written in Japanese. This reflects the gradual acceptance of written Japanese (Jpn. *wabun*) as an acceptable vehicle for expressing Japanese religious consciousness. This process begins with *wasan* and the story-telling of the *Sanbōe kotoba* in the mid-Heian period, but only reaches the level of doctrinal or philosophical expression in the Kamakura, most notably in the *Shōbōgenzō* and the numerous writings of Hōnen's disciples. Hōnen's own compositions appeared in a *wabun* edited form by around 1275 in the so-called *Wago tōroku*. It goes without saying that acceptance of the native Japanese language as a suitable vehicle for religious expression manifests another face of nationalism or at least national consciousness, and my assertion is that the timing of this change is a direct result of the new historical consciousness embodied in the *sangoku-mappō* construct.

Now I present a brief discussion of the way in which Buddhist history was seen as linked to Japanese history in the writings of five Heian and Kamakura Buddhist thinkers, one of whom unfortunately remains anonymous.

Saichō

In a lineage text written in 820, Saichō (767–822) becomes the first person (known to me) to use the term *sangoku*,[4] and he is also the first person to justify his doctrinal and institutional ambitions on the basis of a theory of historical degeneration. Saichō was influenced by Daoxuan's model of Buddhist disintegration as depicted in one section of the Chinese translation of the *Candragarbha Sūtra* within the *Mahāsaṃnipāta Sūtra* collection.[5]

Based on a calculation also prevalent in the rival Hossō school, which followed the scheme of five periods of 500 years, Saichō essentially takes the same interpretive position as had Daoxuan, namely that "the age" was that of "the end of the 'semblance' dharma," or bordering on the beginning of the last 500 year period, which amounts to *mappō*. This view of time as having reached a point just before *mappō* creates a hermeneutic apparatus wherein society or public institutions are showing definite signs of decay,

but there is a vibrancy that still holds out promise for transformation of the world into a better place. For his part, Saichō sees evidence of the decline of Buddhism's fortunes in the corruption of the monks in Nara, and while he does not rationalize his simplified formula for the precepts on this basis, he does use the historical paradigm to justify the establishment of his new sect based on the *Lotus Sūtra*. He justifies his response to the imminent dawning of *mappō* by declaring, without explanation, that the spiritual potential of the Japanese people has now reached the final, "perfect" stage, according to Zhiyi's three-tiered scheme,[6] wherein they are able to absorb the sudden, perfect teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*. This is known in Japanese as the *enki enjuku* construct.

> Now men's faculties have all changed. There is no one [remaining] with Hīnayāna faculties. The period of the True and Semblance Dharma have almost passed, and the age of *mappō* is extremely near. Now is the time for those with faculties suitable for the *Lotus* one-vehicle teaching.[7]

And again, "In the world of our Japan, the complete faculties have now matured, and the complete teachings have finally arisen [in response]."[8] These two statements make clear that, for Saichō, the "complete faculty" or fully realized spirituality is understood as the realization of the single vehicle (Skt. *ekayāna*) teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*. But there is no sense in Saichō, to my knowledge, that Japan's position in this historical paradigm is any different from that of China. His effort seems to be focused on raising a convincing argument that Japan is the equal of China or India.

Regarding the term *mappō*, the earliest proponent of this theory was Keikai (also known as Kyōkai), the author of the *Nihon ryōiki*. Keikai followed the 500- and 1000-year scenario for the "true" and "semblance" dharma periods, and thus calculated that Japan had already entered the final age, that of *mappō*, in 787. Keikai admitted that he himself had failed in his monastic aspirations, and lamented his unintended householder status. His view of Japan is decidedly pessimistic, particularly regarding moral issues, but in *mappō* he seems to have found his rationalization. There is no hint here that Japan has another, less visible, side to its religious identity that is praiseworthy.

Gomyō

Let us now turn to a contemporary opponent of Saichō's effort to found his new sectarian institution, the eminent Hossō cleric Gomyō (750–834). Some ten years after Saichō's use of the term *sangoku*, in 830 Gomyō employs the term in a doctrinal statement of the Hossō school prepared for the court.[9] It appears that Gomyō is clearly reading Saichō when formulating his thesis,

for he seems to feel an imperative to go one interpretive step further. One way in which he attempts to accomplish this is by implying that Japan's position among the three countries is somehow superior. He does this in two ways. First is his statement of the contributions of the three nations to Buddhism:

> What cannot be seen in [the efforts] to ferry sentient beings to the other shore? Thus, in India great men have written lofty treatises, and in China famous monks together have created exegetical commentary. These have all produced the superb achievement of turning ordinary [people] into something holy. This gradual retreat from the wicked and advance toward the good finally led to deep faith in the Three Treasures by Japan as a whole, where it is studied and cultivated in both large and small ways.[10]

Notice how the Buddhist experience of India and China is characterized by the special achievements by some remarkable individuals, but in Japan it is the nation itself that is praised for its reverence for the dharma. Gomyō's second statement regarding Japan's superior status uses a geographical/cosmological argument to essentially elaborate on his statement given above. Here, in answer to the question of where Japan is in the known cosmology, Gomyō first offers a rather personal understanding that it is located in a place called Cāmara, located within two small land masses within Jambudvīpa. And what are the distinguishing characteristics of this place? First of all it is not a continent, and as he explains from examples from the *Datang xiyuji*:

> within the continent of India there are regions which only study the Mahāyāna, some which study only Hīnayāna, some which follow both, and some that only look up to their local gods without believing in the Buddha's Dharma at all. These latter places have never built a monastery from the time of the Buddha to the present day. There are even places where heretical paths are dominant that openly disdain the Buddha and slander his teachings. The same text also describes regions where there are many Daoists, who slander the Buddha's teachings in order to promote their own teachings.

By contrast:

> The sacred court of Japan will have nothing like any of this. The promotion of the nation has meant the erection of many temples and the ordination of many monks and nuns. In addition a great many of the *sūtras*, *śāstras*, and their commentaries are here. . . . Holy people who are incarnations shine their light through other forms.

In other words, Japan is in a different religio-historical category from India or China because it has undiluted, complete faith in Buddhism. It enjoys the fruits of this through an enlightened government which understands that to bring prosperity to the nation it must also pour resources into the building and upkeep of monasteries.

It should be mentioned that Gomyō's political context was one in which he was arguably the most senior monk of his day not only in the Hossō school, but for all the Nara schools. And they had encountered hard times by 830, when the new capital drained government resources and Nara Buddhism seemed like an anachronism. Gomyō writes what is perhaps the first summary of the doctrines of the recognized schools of Buddhism in Japan, but does not appear to be concerned with *mappō*, as the term does not appear in that essay. However, his assertion of a national identity that is not merely equal to India and China but superior, as measured in terms in Buddhist piety, was to reverberate throughout Japanese Buddhism.

Annen

This can be seen rather soon in the Tendai chief abbot (Jpn. *Zasu*) Annen (b. 841), who borrows Gomyō's approach to assert that Japan is superior to India and China but strengthens it even further. Annen's situation differs from that of Saichō or Gomyō in that he was a student of Ennin (794–864) after the latter's return from China in 847. Ennin's description of the suppression of Buddhism and the general breakdown of Tang rule undoubtedly contributes heavily to the Japanese sense of distance separating their own religious identity from that of China. It is therefore not surprising that Annen is the second person known to extol the *sangoku* paradigm in a major way. With Annen we have the new assertion that Japan is the most pure Mahāyāna country in the known world.[11]

> [Compared to other regions,] in the nation of Japan everyone believes in the Mahāyāna. The *Yogācārabhūmi* states that in the east there is a nation where everyone has great spiritual faculties. Is this not our country? The *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra*[12] states that when someone hears the name of Śākyamuni, even if the *bodhicitta* is not put forth, he/she is a bodhisattva. Is there anyone in our country who is not a bodhisattva?[13]

Known chiefly for his vigorous promotion of Vajrayāna as the new centerpiece of Japanese Tendai, Annen adds a dimension of *Lotus* and *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* inclusiveness to Gomyō's nationalism – for Gomyō denied that everything has buddha-nature. Annen also played a pivotal role in clarifying the doctrine of what today is known as original enlightenment thought (Jpn. *hongaku shisō*). Regarding the doctrine of *mappō*, Annen is

more like Kūkai than Saichō, as his tantric stance in essence denudes the *mappō* doctrine of its hermeneutic potential. In this context, spiritual potential is a personal issue, not a historical one. The *dharmakāya* of the buddha as Mahāvairocana is immanent in everything we know, hence everything embodies not merely buddha-nature, but also realized buddhahood. Thus, time is not a serious factor, as there can be no degeneration of truth itself.

The legacy of Annen in terms of the *sangoku-mappō* construct is an assertion of the *sangoku* historical frame, but a weakening of the relevance of *mappō* within it. This optimism was not to last long, however, for by the mid-Heian period the now aristocratically infused Tendai school was looking more and more toward a form of Pure Land thought in which *mappō* plays a central role. The most influential writer in this guise is of course Genshin (942–1017). But in addition to providing a coherent expression of Pure Land sentiment within the Tendai context, Genshin also played a crucial role in this development by successfully asserting the new theory that historical circumstances demanded different doctrines and practices. Genshin lived at a time when the year 1052 was the accepted beginning of *mappō*, so he also felt he was living at the tail end of the "semblance" dharma. He states in the preface to the *Ōjōyōshū*: "These teachings and practices for Birth in the Land of Bliss are the standard for the Latter Age of [this] polluted world."

Genshin has also been studied significantly and so we will not pursue his thought further. But it is worth stating that Genshin spoke of Japan with some confidence as being in a commensurate situation with China *vis-à-vis* the notion of the decline of history. But the latter Heian period takes a decided turn toward the pessimistic, where one finds numerous references to Japan as distant in time and place from the source of sacred truth, the Buddha in India. As Sueki Fumihiko puts it, one of the key issues in Kamakura Buddhism, then, is how to overcome what had become an accepted notion of Japan as being on the outskirts of the Buddhist world.[14]

Kakuken

In the Kamakura period Buddhist historical writing is generally fashioned using one of two patterns. First is the national history model, which chronicles events using a template that organizes the material by imperial ruler, following the precedent of the *Six National Histories* (*Rikkokushi*). This trend can be seen in the *Fusō ryakki* by Kōen (d. 1169) and Jien's *Gukanshō*, dated to 1220. The *Jinnō shōtōki*, completed in 1343 by Kitabatake Chikafusa is merely a Shintō-centered example of the same schematic. The second model follows the *sangoku* format, and is championed most successfully by Gyōnen in numerous works, probably most successfully in the landmark *Sangoku buppō denzū engi*.[15]

An important example in the late Heian to early Kamakura period of the *sangoku-mappō* paradigm is the *Sangoku dentōki*, dated 1173.[16] It was

composed by the Kōfukuji monk Kakuken (1131–1212),[17] a charismatic speaker born into one of the highest ranking Fujiwara families in the capital, and teacher of Jōkei. This work employs the *sangoku* structure championed by Gyōnen a century later. The *Sangoku dentōki* is in fact the earliest known text in Japan with the word *sangoku* in its title. Although it is only partially extant, from what remains it is clear that Kakuken was attempting to outline Buddhism as he saw it: framed as distinctly Indian, Chinese, and Japanese phenomena. In contrast with Annen's anxieties about the destruction of Buddhism in China, Kakuken lived during the Genpei wars, which though not specifically anti-Buddhist, produced enormous destruction and disruption of Buddhist institutions, most notably the burning of Tōdaiji, Kōfukuji, and Enryakuji. For Kakuken, the decline of Buddhism in Japan is the eye-catching theme, explicitly stated in the section called "Consideration of the Age" (Jpn. *jidai ryōken*). Here Kakuken declares that in the 622 years since its transmission to Japan, Buddhism prospered famously, but recently people have let it decline so seriously that it appears to be on the edge of self-destruction. Interestingly, Kakuken takes the traditional Hossō approach, which reckons the world as nearing the end of the fourth of five rounds of 500 years, characterized in the *Candragarbha Sūtra* as one of conflict, though the worst is yet to come in the fifth period. In words almost identical to Saichō's stance more than 350 years earlier, Kakuken declares that Japan is at the "end of the Semblance Dharma." As proof he then mentions the discord evident between monasteries, monks violating precepts and ignoring the karmic consequences, laymen who do not believe in the moral basis of retribution, and other errors of faith.

At the same time, Kakuken also asserts that Japan is uniquely qualified to preserve the dharma because its people are naturally inclined to the Mahāyāna and its holy kings revere the Three Treasures.[18] He reiterates the earlier criticisms of Chinese Daoists, and in fact his discussion of their crimes is longer than his descriptions of the transmission of Buddhism to China and Japan. The rhetoric of *sangoku-mappō* is extended by Kakuken with the premise that renewed faith by the populace will save not only Buddhism but Japan as well. The fusion of Buddhism and the national identity is complete with Kakuken, for whom proper respect for the institutions of Buddhist learning is inherent in the makeup of the Japanese people.

Mappō tōmyōki

It goes without saying that a historical consciousness that asserts the reality of an inevitable march toward degeneration in the secular and sacred realms would have difficulty rationalizing the promotion of piety as a means to stave off such changes. But this is precisely what Kakuken does. By contrast, the next example of the *sangoku-mappō* construct, the *Mappō tōmyōki*, not only abandons that effort but goes beyond that to deny the pragmatic

validity of the most publicly recognized form of piety: the monastic precepts. Traditionally attributed to Saichō, but clearly in violation of his other statements about *mappō*, it is difficult to pinpoint the creation of the *Mappō tōmyōki*, but its impact was most prominently felt in the century between 1150 and 1250 when Hōnen's Pure Land movement was enormously popular and monasticism was called more seriously into question than ever before. Like Kakuken's *Sangoku dentōki*, the fact that the *Mappō tōmyōki* includes the word *mappō* in its title is unprecedented, and by raising this as its central theme, it manifests a new level of concern about what the significance of *mappō* really is. After reviewing the various scriptural predictions of decline, the text concludes that although the present age is at the very end of the "semblance" dharma (Jpn. *zōhō*), "the activities of the monks of this age are already identical to those of the Latter Dharma [Jpn. *mappō*]." Such a statement seems to express both the literary conceit that the monograph was written at the time of Saichō and the author's true feeling that Japan was in fact already in the *mappō* age.

But it is in its radical denial of the very possibility of maintaining the precepts that the *Mappō tōmyōki* seems at once radical, subversive, self-serving, yet existentially honest. The text asserts that various sūtras make plain that in the time of *mappō* in effect there are forms of Buddhism but no real teachings and no real precepts. Thus there are no precepts to be broken. Monks should be rightfully recognized as monks in name only. This fact does not denigrate the value of monks for society, but forces us to look upon them differently:

> These sūtras all specify the age and say that the nominal *bhikṣu* of the future, Latter world will become the future mentor of the people of the world. If one regulates these nominal monks [living] in the world of *mappō* using the precepts of the time of the True Dharma, then the teachings and [monks'] capacities will be opposed to each other; the Dharma and the people would be incompatible.[19]

And again:

> The point under discussion here concerns the fact that in the *mappō* period, there are only nominal *bhikṣus*. These nominal *bhikṣus* are the True Treasures of the world. There are no other fields of merit where one can plant [roots of] merit. Furthermore, if someone were to keep the precepts in the Latter Dharma, this would be exceedingly strange. It would be like a tiger in the marketplace. Who would believe it?

Here we have a clear example of how the *mappō* doctrine is being proposed as the rationale to assert a new model for Japan as a Buddhist nation that no longer needs for its clergy to live by the monastic precepts. This is a

potent new turn for the *sangoku-mappō* construct, and not surprisingly, the *Mappō tōmyōki* was criticized by some in the Kamakura period, most famously Eisai and Nichiren. It is also worth noting that its earliest citation is by Hōnen, who uses it to assert that Saichō recognized that *nenbutsu* works regardless of whether you maintain the precepts or not. Shinran quotes over half of this work in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, and many believe the *Mappō tōmyōki* was written by a monk following a Pure Land form of Buddhism.

Yōsai

Yōsai (also known as Eisai) and Dōgen both admit the scriptural doctrine of the three periods and that many feel it is the "final age," but this should not be taken to mean people's ability to realize the path is negated or even weakened. Yōsai seems more directly concerned about *mappō*. He discusses it in some detail in his *Kōzen gokokuron*, noting, for example, that "everyone says for the time of the Final Age, the *Prajñāpāramitā*, *Lotus*, and *Nirvāṇa Sūtras* should be considered,"[20] a statement that probably reflects the overt politically accommodating nature of that work. In a move similar to what one sees in Nichiren, Yōsai exploits the fear that accompanies the "end of the era/end of the world" imagination as a means to assert his salvific vision of Buddhism via Zen:

> At the present time, we want to suggest Zen to lofty people in this Final Age, so we put them on the straight and narrow path. But even for those types of people who hear little or have weak understanding, even for those who may be exceedingly dull or of little wisdom, if they can devote themselves to *zazen*, they will attain the Way without fail.[21]

Yet Yōsai is also in a position where, like Saichō, he needs to humble himself to gain recognition for his new school. He is thus keenly aware of where Japan stands relative to the rest of the Buddhist world, needing to extol the achievements of Zen in other lands, decry its weakness in Japan, yet argue for Japan's promise. In this he discusses the rise of Zen in Korea prior to its arrival in Japan, and discusses both China and Korea. Someone asks, "Is it true that there are people who have actually completed the path in India and China?" He has seen them with his own eyes. "Could there be such people in Japan as well?" At that point, Yōsai is not afraid to admit that "Japan is on the outskirts of things." Seeds have yet to be planted for this sort of thing, and people are not diligent in keeping the precepts. However, in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* the Buddha predicts that after his death, after some periods of 500 years, in the northeasterly direction a great man will become a buddha. In Yōsai's estimation, this country is Japan, so everyone should not despise their geographical location.[22]

Dōgen on *mappō* may seem somewhat fickle, recognizing it when lamenting how few serious students he is able to find in phrases like "in bad times like now, *mappō*" and "now, at the end of the age, there is hardly anyone with a sincere religious attitude." But in the *Bendōwa*, he dismisses such talk of historical decline as nothing but *upāya*, for "In the true teaching of the Mahāyāna, there is no division between True, Imitative, and Final; for those who practice, it is said that all will achieve the Way."[23]

Both Hōnen and Shinran also refer to the triple-nation model and their writings also presume the *mappō* doctrine in a variety of ways. But as both thinkers were reacting to the *mappō* paradigm in very complex ways, I would like to defer comment on their view of the *sangoku-mappō* construct to a later date.

Jien

Jien (1155–1225) authored the *Gukanshō*, which he completed in 1219. Although the word *mappō* only appears once in the *Gukanshō*, the work brims with tales of degeneration, as all seven periods of Japanese history laid out by Jien are marked by "progressive decay," and in statements like "In ancient times, sovereigns were wise about administrative matters. . . . But during the Final Age, Emperors have been young – tending to be child Emperors."[24] Jien is clearly struggling not to let his knowledge of the past render his view of the future too pessimistic. There is no question that he regarded his present era as being within *mappō*, and in dividing up the past, the Tendai calculation of 1052 as the beginning of *mappō* is clearly part of his conclusion that after Go-Sanjō's reign (1034–1073), there was a "sharp turn toward the Final Age."[25] Jien refers to the triad of India, China, Japan when he wants to argue a general principle, so it can be argued that his thought is another form of the *sangoku-mappō* construct. Jien adds, however, a number of new ideas that very much enrich the conception. For example, the ancient adage that the Japanese imperial house would last 100 reigns was a figurative statement that was originally intended to mean "incalculable." But Jien saw this as a historical prediction of the finite nature not only of the ruling family, but of Japan as a whole, and in his interpretation it took on eschatological meaning.[26]

Jien's work is also written in Japanese, a decision that he did not take lightly, as he discusses why he chose to write the book this way in its final chapter. In this sense, the *Gukanshō* is "modern," or at least attempts to be. Another expression of Jien's modernism is his inclusion of the prevailing Tendai theory that different buddhas manifest in different periods and different places, depending upon individual circumstances.[27]

Jien also expands the three period idea so that he can apply it to his critical view of various periods of imperial rule. In this scheme, for example, the thirteen rulers beginning with Jinmu constitute a reign period of "the

True Dharma." When combined with Jien's repeated assertion that the time of warriors is the time of the "end of the world" and other statements to the effect that the end of the world means the dissolution of people's understanding of the principles that underlie the world, the reader of the *Gukanshō* is left with two impressions: first, that the construct of three periods of time has been relevant to the Japanese situation even before the Japanese had ever heard of Buddhism; second, that in fact its most serious consequences are not in the areas of faith, practice, doctrine, or institutional corruption within the *saṅgha*, but in the powers that rule society politically. Jien also uses a theory of *kalpas* to predict the future of the nation. In other words, for Jien the history of Buddhism and the history of Japan are proceeding in parallel fashion. As they are following the same timeline, there is a strong suggestion that they are indivisible. But more than the three periods of "true," "semblance," and "final," Jien's ultimate sense of time and history is based on the Buddhist cosmological notion of four *kalpas*, and the twenty mini-*kalpas* or divisions within each.[28]

He is not the first to do this – it can be seen in the earlier *Ōkagami* and *Fusō ryakki* – but it is not something seen in the historical outlook of the earlier figures of Saichō, Gomyō, and Annen, or in the *Mappō tōmyōki*. One can speculate that Jien is drawn to this theory because of its sense of renewal for the world, and for Buddhism. The *Gukanshō* is also marked by a lack of assertion of Japanese superiority or uniqueness. For Jien, the principles that underlie the operation of good government apply to all nations, meaning of course the three nations:

> One can conclude that in China and India as well, in the customs of the three nations, the principles behind the rise and fall of the Southern Continent (that is, this world) [is one that] declines and then rises, rises and then declines. According to circumstances, at one extreme people's lives are reduced to only ten years. But then at the end of this small *kalpa* it gradually improves to where people's lives reach eighty thousand years. The hundred reigns within [this small *kalpa*] are also subject to rising and falling [of fortunes], depending upon whether people are motivated or not to follow principle.[29]

Gyōnen

Let us now turn to Gyōnen (1240–1321), who, over time, has proven to be arguably the best read of all the premodern Buddhist thinkers who have an explicit historical consciousness. With Gyōnen we have the enigma of an exceedingly strong sense of *sangoku* but an unusually weak concern for *mappō*. Gyōnen wrote over a hundred monographs on a variety of themes, and his total fascicle output astonishingly reaches over 1200. Gyōnen's *Sangoku buppō denzū engi* mentioned above is a landmark work of Buddhist

history, borrowing Kakuken's prototype format to create a work of enormous historical detail and specificity that served as a reference work on Buddhist history up into the Meiji period. But even in his doctrinal treatises, such as the *Risshū kōyō*, *Jōdo hōmon genrushō*, or *Hasshū kōyō*, the structure clearly follows the same formula of beginning everything in India, if possible, detailing how many years had elapsed after the Buddha's death before such-and-such treatise was written, moving to China, and then outlining the transmission to Japan.

But Gyōnen never discusses *mappō* or the end of the world, never mentions degeneration or decay in social or religious institutions, never laments the fact that people are not as pious as they used to be, that monks are not maintaining the precepts or throwing themselves into their practice with enough diligence. As the leading intellectual of Tōdaiji in his time, one could argue that he was merely expressing the traditional religious perspective of the old forms of Japanese Buddhism, but then the contrast with other old school thinkers like Kōen, Kakuken, or Jien is striking, for they all employ themes of degeneration and the need to encourage renewal. Gyōnen instead seems to be speaking from a position of utter confidence that Buddhism is not something that can be destroyed by time. While he never makes this assertion explicitly, it can be inferred from his approach to writing history, in which he takes a continuously upbeat, positive tone. Gyōnen's historical treatises amount to a historical presentation of the highlights of a tradition. Unlike Jien, who is overt about the difficulty in understanding the significance of historical change, Gyōnen never alludes to even the possibility that the dharma has changed. In this, one is reminded of the position of Annen, in which *hongaku* thinking means that the physical world is realized buddhahood. But Gyōnen is not in the Tendai tradition. While the notion of *dharmadhātu* carries with it similar implications, and he wrote a voluminous commentary on Kūkai's *Jūjūshinron*, one does not find the term *hongaku* or reference to the buddha attainment by grasses and trees, a position echoed in Kūkai and trumpeted by Annen, in his own philosophical positions.

The period in which Gyōnen lived is one in which the sense of political and social chaos accompanying the demise of Fujiwara rule and its replacement by warrior leaders – as experienced by Kakuken and Jien – had all but disappeared. This has led some to argue that *mappō* consciousness is really a reflection of social conditions, and hence in Gyōnen's case it has all but ceased to be relevant. But this view ignores some very real political crises that dominated the political scene during Gyōnen's life. First was the threat of Mongol invasions from Korea that existed from the arrival of the first Mongol envoys at the Dazaifu in 1268 through the incursions in 1274 and 1281, and lasting until Khubilai's death in 1294. The preparations to resist these threats nearly bankrupted the government. Second, and often overlooked, was a crisis in the halls of power. In the Bakufu, the power of the

Hōjō regents had weakened considerably, while a succession struggle between Emperors Kameyama and Go-Fukakusa that began in 1275 slowly intensified, and at the time of Gyōnen's death, emperor Go-Daigo was on the throne and already in conflict with the Bakufu for refusing to abdicate. And, indeed, war would break out ten years later. So there is plenty of insecurity in the world for the *mappō* doctrine to be seen as self-evident; but for Gyōnen this is apparently not so.

I see Gyōnen as adding something to the *sangoku-mappō* that has been missing: a credible version of events in India. Utilizing recently imported Song dynasty historical documents such as the *Fo-tsu t'ung chi*, Gyōnen was able to provide a narrative for the formation of all Buddhist schools thought to derive from India. If Buddhism is pictured as an ideal form of spirituality in Gyōnen, India is the quintessentially idealized land of truth. Not only is India the land where the Buddha chose to make his appearance, but it spawned bodhisattva after bodhisattva who contributed to the glory of the dharma. Gyōnen's objective, then, appears to have been to restore the sacred cosmos by highlighting the sacrality of an imagined India while consciously dropping the foreboding implications of *mappō*. Not surprisingly, he rejects any notion of Japanese uniqueness. He promotes a consciousness of India, not by dividing history into three periods of descending truth or four *kalpas* wherein human life shortens and lengthens from ten to eighty-four thousand years, but by detailing discrete historical events in a linear timeline, providing historical references to China and Japan by providing the relevant *nengō*, but also similar references to India by detailing how many years had passed since the death of the Buddha. In implying that all these events are historically significant, Gyōnen appears to be fighting against the deterministic implications of *mappō*. As a champion for restoration of the precepts for all monks, we can put Gyōnen at the opposite end from the sentiments expressed in the *Mappō tōmyōki*.

Conclusion

Among the ways in which the enigma of Kamakura Buddhism is expressed following the breakdown of Heian political and socio-cultural norms are a number of metahistoric statements made by professional Buddhist clergy. I am therefore suggesting we view terms like *sangoku* and *mappō* (or *matsudai*) not as historical statements per se, but as statements about history. Whether this language reflects genuine and lasting cultural change, or is only a matter of shifting norms of rhetoric without a corresponding shift in values, beliefs, and goals, remains an open question. This chapter is a small beginning to suggest the need for a broader look at the meaning of history or historical consciousness in this period, for the writings of the late Heian and Kamakura periods reflect a time when many Japanese were openly critical of the society and institutions of not only their own society, but also, I would suggest, of

the legacy of Chinese Buddhism as well. This implies that the alienation from, or seeing beyond, China is an inevitable by-product of the increase in national self-consciousness. And when the world seems to be going to hell, many questions about society, about the nation, are thus called into question. This national self-awareness manifests in various ways. One is in the desire of some of the most serious students of the dharma, the likes of Yōsai and Kōben, to travel not to China for study, but to India. Another is the appearance of Buddhist "historians" or at least learned individuals like Kōen, Jien, Gyōnen, and Shiren, who write sweeping historical essays that are filled with historiographic data. Yet another is in the emergence of a figure like Nichiren, who can only understand Japan's position not as an extension of an earlier temporal and geographic tradition, but as the ultimate destination of it. Nichiren's very name alludes to a fusion of native sacrality ("*nichi*," sun, representing Amaterasu, the Japanese sun goddess) and Buddhist sacrality ("*ren*," lotus, representing the *Lotus Sūtra*).

But what are the messages in this metalanguage? This is another way of asking what is really new when we speak of so-called "Kamakura Buddhism." As I have tried to show, the historical consciousness embedded in the term *sangoku* – perhaps the most easily identifiable expression of an international awareness that we have from this period and used by all the major Buddhist thinkers in the Kamakura period (Kōen, Jien, Kakuken, Gyōnen, Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen, Nichiren, Shiren, etc.) – can be traced back at least as far as Saichō. *Sangoku* is thus not a new concept for this period. The theory of historical decline in one or another theory is also very ancient, and certainly predates Buddhism's entry into Japan. But it, too, can be traced in historical records back to the Nara period, and appears in Saichō as well. One of the ultimate difficulties here is in clarifying not only when what terms appear in the rhetoric, but when their meaning is redefined by their usage. To give a concrete example, when the Nara and early Heian thinkers like Zenshu, Saichō, or Gomyō speak of the "final age," the accompanying statements they make signal that the fact that things are dreadful in general does not mean that proper guidance cannot lead people out of this mess, or even that the amount of impious behavior cannot be accommodated. But when we see this in twelfth- and thirteenth-century thinkers like Kakuken, Jien, Hōnen, Kamo no Chōmei, or Nichiren, the sense of real crisis is prominent, and the adage of "desperate times require desperate measures" is overtly operative in their rhetoric in a way not even implied in the earlier period.

But this begs the question of what doctrines are genuinely new with the onset of the medieval period. Consider Hōnen as the supposed father of the so-called "new schools" of Kamakura Buddhism. Was the *nenbutsu* doctrine and the acceptance as orthodox of only three Pure Land *sūtra*s out of so many actually radically new? Clearly not; the *nenbutsu* had been practiced since at least the Nara period, and there are frescos of Amitābha painted at

Hōryūji. The Zen school, too, had clearly been in Japan at least from the time of Saichō, who is also explicit about his lineage connections to the Chan school on the continent. Faith in the authority of the *Lotus Sūtra* is of course not new with Nichiren, as the moniker Hokke-shū expresses; once again we go back to Saichō for this on Japanese soil.

But something is new in the Kamakura period. People are mobilized by religious impulses in a way not seen before, there are new forms of religious expression even if they are deeply dependent on pre-existing rhetoric, new institutions are created, and these new forms of religion continue to develop to where they eclipse what came before them. The rise in the use of the native Japanese language in monographs for religious expression and, in the case of Jien's *Gukanshō*, historical writing must be seen as indicative of a major change in national consciousness regarding the value of "things Japanese." Jien's monograph concludes with a brief discussion of why he chose to write it in Japanese, admitting to a certain inelegance in Japanese letters compared to Chinese, but this is overshadowed by his desire for the accessibility this will provide. Jien wants to be read. Hōnen and Nichiren want to be heard. They have to write in *kanbun* (the Japanese system of writing Chinese) to satisfy their professional colleagues, but they also want to circulate their ideas in *wabun* so more people can access them. This is one of the profound changes marking the Kamakura period. Perhaps inspired by Jien, Gyōnen's histories of Buddhism, though expressed in Chinese, are without precedent in breadth and detail, and also signify the legitimacy of the new schools of Zen and Pure Land.

What about the theme of ethnocentrism? From Saichō through Gomyō and Annen, we see national interest emerging as a compelling need to assert Japan's spiritual maturity and grow into statements of uniqueness. But whereas Annen wants his audience to think that scripture has predicted Japan as the ideal Mahāyāna kingdom, Kakuken looks around him and sees a depressing lack of faith, respect, and diligence. Is his statement that Japan is "naturally inclined to the Mahāyāna" a conscious echo of Annen's bravado, or a feeble attempt to offer something positive to balance out his otherwise biting criticism of Japanese religiosity? Sueki identified three ways in which Kamakura thinkers attempted to deal with the national sense of alienation from the source of Buddhist truth. First, recognize it but assert that diligent practice will still lead to liberation. This is the strategy taken, for example, by Jōkei and Dōgen. Second, accept the situation as existentially impossible and seek other means that the Buddhas have provided for us, typically a *honji suijaku* kind of faith in which Amida or Jizō is incarnated in others. This is found in the thought of Shinran. Third, accept the situation but turn it around by affirming that this time and this place is precisely what the Buddha was preparing the world for so he could make his next revelation. Nichiren exemplifies this approach. The latter two manifest a certain ethnocentrism, though not necessarily in a chauvinistic sense. It is

also worth restating that for Nichiren, his own role is a crucial part of Japan's identity as the topos for the enactment or realization of *Lotus Sūtra*; his vision is therefore particularly historical.

There are other ways in which Buddhists responded to the general malaise of national self-alienation. Hōnen accepts *mappō* but does not seek manifestations of truth in Japan the nation or Japanese individual heroes. *Mappō* is a sign pointing to another sacred reality but it has nothing to do with the destiny of Japan or his own role in its revelation. Yōsai is realistic about the existential dilemma facing Japan in its distance from India, particularly regarding the precepts, but he remains bullish in asserting Japan's predicted future as home to future buddhas. Unlike in Nichiren, this does not imply a central role for himself, or an ethnocentric role for Japan as unique savior of the unenlightened world. Gyōnen reinforces the perception of the historical robustness of Buddhism. His world is big enough to include *mappō*, though it does not occupy a prominent position. His history of Pure Land Buddhism does not even mention it. But neither is Gyōnen explicit about "attaining the Way." Instead he appears to find his sacrality in Buddhism in a communal sense; the rhetoric of truth for Gyōnen is implicit in his delineation of the international unfolding of Buddhism through history across the known world. In one of the few signs of nationalism, he uses the term "Great Land of Japan" as a section heading in the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi*. Though one does not see the prefix *dai* (great) before India or China in the same context, there is precedent to this form dating back to the *Nihon shoki*, and elsewhere we do find the appellation "Great Tang."

I have tried to show how one aspect of Kamakura period Buddhist writing expressed anxiety over the notion of Japan's place in the world in terms of the temporal paradigm of inevitable historical decline and the geographical paradigm of the three holy nations of India, China, and Japan. In some sense the temporal issue was less troubling: the predictions of degeneration of the dharma and the world are plain enough in the *sūtra*s, the result of which compelled any religious leader to respond, but also gave him the freedom to do so creatively. The *sangoku* concept is on the surface far easier to grasp, but its implications are far more subtle to discern. Does the adoption of this frame imply Japan is beholden to India and China, that Japan is equal to India and China, or that the author feels himself standing outside all three?

In other words, is the increasing acceptance of *sangoku* rhetoric in the Kamakura period (it now appears in military tales like the *Heike monogatari* and the *Taiheiki* as well) thus symptomatic of a new sense of distance, of ever greater alienation from Japan's own past, a nostalgic anachronism from a time when it was an integral part of this trinational model, one that had become harder and harder to believe in? Does the sudden rise in philosophical monographs written in Japanese support this view of a kind of

grand decoupling from continental precedent? A broad-based, newfound confidence in native religious experience is unquestionably implied in the *sangoku* rhetoric. But there is another sense in which *sangoku* implies distance, implies India and China as other. With the exception of individual *Siddham* characters, the Japanese notion of scripture was entirely based on the Chinese language. India therefore only had a rhetorical reality. The repeated assertion of the trinational frame in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was not based on the opening up of a new channel of communication to India. The prominence afforded to India in the conceptual framework of *sangoku* is first an implicit statement on the relativizing of China as a source of truth. But given the fact that Japan's ignorance of India remained unchanged from previous centuries, such a relativizing of China ultimately points to a new view of Japan. And what were people saying about Japan in these essays? They were critical – the people were not diligent enough, they did not respect the precepts, they lacked faith. But they were also unapologetically nationalistic – Japan was uniquely qualified to become the first fully realized Mahāyāna nation.

In some sense, these paradoxical attitudes reflect the inevitable conundrum that is at the heart of what are self-contradictory concepts. *Sangoku* binds Japan to an idealized India, yet in doing so serves as the ultimate historical albatross preventing full acceptance of Japanese spirituality. And this is precisely because an unknown and idealized India is nearly impossible to criticize, preventing the Japanese from creating a comfortable degree of distance wherein its own identity can be recognized and fostered. *Mappō* as the final pessimistic expression of a historical paradigm of inevitable degeneration is a similarly heavy anchor that, except for the most diehard believer, precludes hope, one of the most important of religious virtues. On the other hand, such utter pessimism is existentially and culturally unsustainable. And if we look at how many religious writers of the time responded to it, *mappō* turns out to be a remarkably empowering idea, particularly in the Kamakura period. For one cannot live comfortably with *mappō* as is – its message of despair demands a creative response, an accommodation of one sort or another. This is why those most impacted by the historical implications of *mappō* in the Kamakura period – Shinran and Nichiren – become ennobled by it.

Notes

1 See Lucia Dolce, "Awareness of *Mappō*: Soteriological Interpretations of Time in Nichiren" *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, fourth series, 7 (1992), pp. 81–106; Jacqueline Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 12. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp. 254–260, et seq. Nichiren's views on history, *mappō*, and Japan's expected role in the unfolding of the dharma is most evident in his *Senjishō*, at *Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun* 181.2,

p. 1003; translated in P. B. Yampolksy and B. Watson, *Selected Writings of Nichiren*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 181–249.

2 See James Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 177–184.

3 See Hongan Yakushikyō sho, *Nihon daizōkyō*, 5.2.

4 This appears in the introductory section of Saichō's *Naishō buppō sōjō kechimyaku-fu*, one of the earliest lineage statements in Japanese Buddhism. At *Nihon daizōkyō* 75.243, and also in Hiei-zan Senjuin Fuzoku Eizan Gakuin, ed., *Dengyō Daishi zenshū*, Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankōkai, 1989, vol. 1, 199, Ono 8.273d.

5 *Da-fang-deng da-ji jing yue-zang fen*, *Dai hōdō daijikkyō gatsuzō bun* at T. No. 397, 13.363a29–b5; *Sangoku dentōki* at Narita, 236b14.

6 Zhiyi labels these as *geshu* (sowing the karmic seeds that will grow to the fruit of buddhahood), *jōjuku* (ripening, maturing), and *gedatsu* (freed, liberated). See Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School*, Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, no. 7, Berkeley: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, and Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1984, pp. 181–182.

7 See *Shugo kokkai shō, Dengyō Daishi zenshū* 2.249.

8 See *Ehyō Tendaishū, Dengyō Daishi zenshū* 3.343.

9 See *Daijō hossō kenjinshō*, T. no. 2309, 71.1.

10 Ibid., 1a.

11 Among other places, see Annen's *Futsū-ju bosatsu-kai kōshaku*, T. no. 2381, 74.757c19ff; his *Taizō kongō bodaishin ryakumondō gishō*, T. no. 2397, 75.488c6, etc. See also his *Kyōji-jō* at T. no. 2395a, 75.355ab. On Annen and Gomyō, see Ichino Hideo, "Heian Bukkyō keiseiki ni okeru sangoku-kan," in *Ōtani Daigaku daigakuin kenkyū kiyō*, 13 (December 1996), pp. 71–91.

12 This could be one of three sūtras. There are two translations of the *āgama* entitled *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra*, at T. nos 118 and 119. But here he must be referring to the Mahāyāna version thought to be a derivative of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, at T. no. 120, 2.512.

13 *Futsū-ju bosatsukai kōshaku*. T. no. 2381, 74.757cc19ff. See also his *Kyōji-jō* at T. no. 2395a, 75.355, where Annen uses both the *sangoku* and *shū* frames discussed below, though without the structure or detail supplied by Gyōnen.

14 Sueki Fumihiko, "Bukkyōteki sekaikan to esunosentorizumu [Ethnocentrism and the Buddhist Worldview]," in *Nihon Bukkyōshi ronkō*, Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1993, p. 110.

15 In this context the *Kankō ruijūshō* is relevant. This is the first record of the oral transmission of teachings within the Tendai school. It also serves as a kind of lineage statement for Tendai. But though it is attributed to Tōyōbō Chūjin (1065–1138), its provenance is disputed, and many feel it dates to the late Kamakura period. At T. no. 2371, 74.373, Ono 2.98b; see also Ōno Tatsunosuke, *Nihon bukkyōshi jiten*, Tokyo: Tokyodō Shuppan, 1979, p. 89.

16 *Sangoku dentōki*. Originally in three fascicles, only the first and third are extant. Both extant fascicles have been published in Narita Teikan, "Kakuken sen Sangoku dentōki no kenkyū," *Bukkyō Daigaku daigakuin kenkyū kiyō*, no. 2 (1971), pp. 199–241; and the third fascicle alone has also appeared in Nakamura Akiko, "Ryūkoku Daigaku zō Sangoku dentōki gekan," *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, no. 36 (1980), pp. 45–61.

17 Washio 136a. Kakuken was the fifth son of Fujiwara Michinori (also called Shinzei , 1106–1160), Counsellor of State. Kakuken eventually became abbot of Kōfukuji, reaching the rank of Associate Archbishop. His only other known work is the *Inmyōshō* in five fascicles, *Dainihon bukkyō zensho*, no. 94, 27.1.

18 Narita, 234b12.
19 Modified from R. Rhodes, *The Candle of the Latter Dharma*, BDK Tripitaka 107-III. Berkeley: Numata Translation Center, 1994, p. 18.
20 *Kōzen gokokuron*, T. no. 2543, 80.4a4.
21 Ibid., T. 80.12b29.
22 Ibid., T. 80.16a16ff.
23 *Shōbōgenzo*, Iwanami bunko hon, vol. 1, p. 40.
24 Delmer M. Brown and Ichiro Ishida, trs, *The Future and the Past: A Translation and Study of the Gukansho, An Interpretative History of Japan Written in 1219*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979, p. 72 and 14n.
25 Ibid., p. 433. Jien also refers to period four as the onset of the "final age" on page 207; see n. 22. The lack of specific designation of the year or reign when *mappō* begins may seem odd, particularly when compared to Kōen's *Fuso ryakki*, which does provide one. But elsewhere Jien does specify the year 1052 as the beginning of *mappō*. See his *Confession on the Occasion of a Memorial Recitation of the Sonsho Darani*.
26 This interpretation was not Jien's alone, but apparently believed in by many at this time. See Ōmori Shirō, "Chūsei *mappō*kan to hyakuō shisō" in *Bunka*, no. 27.
27 Brown and Ishida refer to the *Sanbō jūjishō* for this notion, which is probably a mistake for the *Sanbō jūjishū*, a work from this period falsely attributed to Saichō. It is only partially extant, reconstructed from its citations in other documents, published in *Nihon daizōkyō*, vol. 40, the *Dengyō Daishi zenshū*, vol. 4, and elsewhere.
28 Jien saw the world as being in the deteriorating first half of the ninth small *kalpa* (of twenty) within the second of the four *kalpas*, the one characterized by relatively flat existence.
29 *Gukanshō*, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 86, Okami Masao and Akamatsu Toshihide, eds, p. 148, l. 5.

4

TEXTS, TALISMANS, AND JEWELS

The *Reikiki* and the performativity of sacred texts in medieval Japan

Fabio Rambelli

Texts have several lives. Historical and social contexts produce different approaches to texts. Today we generally (except perhaps passionate bibliophiles) take for granted that a text is something to be read, and reading is an action that attributes or extracts meaning from the text, and the identification of such meaning, whatever that is, is the final goal of our interaction with a text.[1] These are the assumptions that usually inform our approach to medieval religious texts. However, medieval religious texts were not necessarily and not only "read," and "reading" was not always and necessarily a personal, solitary and introspective activity of disembodied decoding of the inherent meaning of a text – as we understand such a process today. Medieval texts had not just a "meaning" – understood as the "signified" of the text itself as the "signifier" – but also several "uses," many of which were defined in a ritual way. Three issues are particularly important in the consideration of the theoretical implications of the "uses" of medieval texts: the performative nature of the texts, their materiality, and their value. By performative nature of texts, I mean the fact that texts had to be "performed" (used, enacted, handled) in some ways other than as signifiers. In many cases, in fact, texts had value not necessarily and not only for their meaning, their "immaterial" part, but also and primarily for their *material* aspect. As particular material entities with spiritual power, texts were endowed with all the characteristics of sacred objects, and were not essentially different from relics, icons, and talismans. It is in this sacred materiality that is to be found the "value" of those texts: the economic price for which they and their related rituals could be bought and/or exchanged, but also their symbolic and religious capital. In the world of medieval Japanese religion, access to texts depended largely on the supposed moral and epistemological status of "readers" – a status that was often ontologically grounded. Such

policing of reading entailed a politics of meaning. Importantly, though, "meaning" was not restricted to the "signified" of these texts but encompassed larger semiotic contexts.

This chapter is organized in the following way. First, I provide a few examples of the ways in which medieval texts were treated and circulated. Then, I introduce as a test case the *Reikiki*, an important document of Shintō-Buddhist interaction. This text will enable us to see some epistemological assumptions and ritual functions of medieval Japanese religious literature. I then investigate the scriptural templates and ontological ideas that ground works such as the *Reikiki*. I address the issue of the practice of medieval text; in particular, I suggest that medieval texts often functioned as talismans and other objects imbued with sacred power.

Performed texts

In medieval Japan texts were written, copied, edited, commented upon, ritually transmitted. In some cases, however, their reading was restricted if not forbidden, or simply did not take place at all. Some of the most influential texts in the modern "canon" of Japanese religion did not receive much scholastic interest before the Edo period or even until after the Meiji era, as in the case of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* and Shinran's *Tannishō*. The *Shōbōgenzō*, now considered to be Dōgen's (1200–1253) masterwork containing the fundamental teachings of Sōtō Zen, received a brief scholarly interest in the late Kamakura period, with two commentaries by, respectively, Senne (active 1243–1263) and Kyōgō (active 1303–1308).[2] It subsequently disappeared as a doctrinal source for about four centuries, until the Sōtō priest Tenkei Denson (1648–1735) and the Rinzai priest Mujaku Dōchū (1653–1744) wrote their respective critical commentaries in the mid-Edo period.[3] The *Shōbōgenzō* had existed and circulated in several and often quite different versions, in a way that questions positivistic ideas about authorship, textual closure, and interpretive processes. As William Bodiford writes, during the Tokugawa period:

> there was no definitive version of the text. All major Sōtō temples had a *Shōbō genzō*; the name was widely known. Some temples, however, had only a single chapter. Expanded recensions varied between twelve, twenty-eight, sixty, seventy-five, and eighty-three or eighty-four chapter versions. Comparisons between these different recensions were conducted only with great difficulty because access to the manuscripts was limited to senior monks who had a direct affinity with the particular temple possessing a text. When comparisons were made, they revealed major discrepancies between the different texts. Some chapters have variant editions. Copyist errors, deletions, and additions were found in most manuscripts.

> Moreover, at least one false chapter, "Shinzō," also had been in circulation since the fifteenth century.[4]

This was the situation of most important texts handed down from the Heian and Kamakura periods. It is not surprising, then, that "Because of this confused situation, the authenticity of the entire *Shōbō genzō* was considered doubtful" to the point that in 1700 the Sōtō establishment "argued against the authority of the *Shōbō genzō*" before the Shogunate.[5]

The *Tannishō*, a collection of Shinran's (1173–1262) sayings edited by his disciple Yuien (active 1288), is now considered by many to be the quintessence of Shinran's thought. It is now one of the most widely circulating Buddhist texts worldwide. However, the actual founder of Jōdo Shin-shū orthodoxy, Rennyo (1415–1499), prohibited it to ordinary readers. He wrote in a colophon at the end of the book: "These sacred teachings are important and secret [Jpn. *daiji*] teachings of our school. Those who did not plant good karmic seeds in the past and the untrustworthy ones cannot have access to it."[6]

In some cases, furthermore, entire doctrinal discourses were built upon non-existent passages from some scriptures. Two cases are particularly significant in this respect. The first case is the following citation: "When Sākyamuni attains enlightenment, all plants and trees turn into the buddha-body and preach the dharma." Allegedly drawn from the *Chūingyō*, it is quoted in countless premodern sources (ranging from highly specialized doctrinal treatises down to Nō plays) as a "scriptural" ground to justify the doctrine of the buddhahood of non-sentients.[7] The second case is the "Stanza of women's karmic hindrances" (*Nyonin gōshō ge*), used to justify women's social and soteriologic inferiority. The stanza circulated as an excerpt from either the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* or the *Garland Sūtra*, but cannot be found in the extant versions of these scriptures:[8]

> The karmic hindrances of one woman
> are like all the afflictions
> of all men
> in three thousand worlds.
> Women are messengers from hell:
> they destroy the buddha-seeds,
> outwardly they are like bodhisattvas
> but in their heart they are like demons.

In both cases, "virtual," non-existent texts, were the keys to important doctrines.

Other texts, such as ritual instructions (Jpn. *giki*, *shidai*, etc.), initiatory documents (Jpn. *kirigami*), and initiation certificates (Jpn. *injin*), that today we treat as curiosities (or, at best, as traces of the ritual world of medieval

Japanese religiosity), were some of the most precious texts in premodern Japan. They were the key for direct access to enlightenment and represented important tools for their authors' legitimization and, sometimes, fame. These texts seem to have functioned more as diplomas or even money – that is, written objects that have a certain performative value – than today's books.

It is true that texts also functioned as tools to convey meaning, much as in today's texts. In particular, Buddhist scriptures were read and studied, and were the material of an enormous commentarial activity identified by Iyanaga Nobumi as "scholastic asceticism."[9] In many cases, however, scriptures were copied (sometimes in one's blood[10]), chanted, illustrated, placed inside buddha images, buried – all uses that, however "meaningful" in a broader sense, do transcend the words written on them and pertain to ritual uses and contexts; in fact, such uses of the texts transcend the limits of what we would consider today an appropriate "interpretation."[11]

Even when actually read, medieval texts were read in a different way. Reading was usually not silent, but voiced; most medieval texts are actually notes for lectures, transcriptions of actual lectures and oral transmissions, or models for master–disciple interaction. In other words, orality was an important component of medieval textuality. Reading was often not a public and free (also economically) activity. Even the very people who could actually read did not have an easy access to religious texts. It was important to establish connections with some religious or private institution endowed with a library, to create a network of people from whom to borrow (and to whom to lend) books. More often than not, access to texts was controlled by long and complicated initiatory training and procedures known as oral transmission (Jpn. *kuden*). Such ritual procedures actually culminated not just in oral, secret teachings, but also in the transmission of written texts and documents. Underlying the logic of *kuden* is the idea that access to a certain text is not necessarily a step to the acquisition of information and knowledge; often, on the contrary, it merely sanctioned that acquisition. In this sense, receiving a text was not an encouragement to read more, but the certification that one had read enough. As a consequence, secretly transmitted texts became sorts of regalia indicating one's worthiness (spiritual development, enlightenment). In this sense, at least certain texts functioned as tokens of the transformation of economic capital into symbolic capital and vice versa. One had to invest time, money, and labor (at the same time physical, ritual, and semiotic) in order to acquire them.[12] Their acquisition, however, endowed the owner with symbolic capital as a disciple of a certain master, as initiated to a certain tradition, and in some cases even an enlightened buddha. As such, texts could become the cornerstones of wealth-generating activities such as carrying out one's master lineage, teaching, or merely benefiting from the supernatural protection that sacred texts were believed to bestow upon their legitimate owners.

Let us now turn our attention to a specific text, the *Reikiki*, which serves as a test case to study the manifold functions of medieval religious works.

Reikiki: an experimental text

Reikiki is one of the most important texts of the so-called *Ryōbu* Shintō tradition. It is composed of eighteen fascicles: fourteen constitute the main text, and the last four contain only iconographic material. Many copies exist of the text, but scholars have pointed to the existence of at least three different versions.[13] This strange and puzzling text defies all categories that academics and religionists alike have been developing over the centuries to classify Shintō doctrines and rituals. Its peculiar combination of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian elements makes it quite anomalous in the panorama of medieval Japanese religion and culture. Thus, it is probably not by chance that the *Reikiki* has been little studied.[14]

Despite its importance, very little is known about the genesis of the *Reikiki*. It has been attributed in the past to several personages, such as Kōbō Daishi[15] and Shōtoku Taishi,[16] and even to a collaborative effort of En no Gyōja, Kōbō Daishi, Dengyō Daishi, and emperor Daigo.[17] The text itself claims to be the transcription by emperor Daigo (885–930, r. 897–930) of a secret initiation he received from the dragon woman living in the pond of the Shinsen'en garden of the imperial palace compound.[18] Modern scholars think that the *Reikiki* was written by a Shingon priest, or priests, connected to the Ise Shrines.[19] This attribution, however, is not completely convincing, given the numerous Tendai esoteric elements present in the text. There is no clear information either on the date and place of composition. The text is quoted in Watarai Ieyuki's *Ruijū jingi hongen* of 1320, and therefore must have already been in existence by then.[20] On the basis of sources cited in the *Reikiki* and ideas present in it, scholars consider it a late Kamakura text. Wata Hidenori, in particular, places its composition between the Kōan era (1278–1288) and 1320.[21] As for the place of composition, Murayama Shūichi suggests that the *Reikiki* was authored by a priest related to Ise's Outer Shrine, but there is no solid evidence for that.[22]

All the apocryphal attributions I mentioned suggest a close connection, already established at the level of authorship and rationale for composition, between the *Reikiki*, esoteric Buddhist doctrines, and imperial protocols concerning the *kami*. The status of the *kami* is in fact one of the major conceptual foci of the text. However, the *Reikiki* itself is not a philosophical treatise, but a sort of ritual manual and a collection of initiatory instructions. The themes addressed in the various chapters are quite common in medieval combinatory literature. They range from cosmology (especially cosmogonic theories and the place of Japan in the universe) to theology (the status and role of the *kami*),[23] soteriology (a theory and practice of salvation with many *hongaku* (original enlightenment) elements), the role of

authority, in particular the emperor, and issues related to the representation of the sacred. The way in which these themes are treated, however, is quite peculiar, and in some cases without equivalent in any other extant text. This fact, together with the peculiarity of the iconography, is perhaps an indication of the essentially experimental nature of the *Reikiki*.

The peculiarity of the *Reikiki* shows in several aspects. The most striking one is perhaps its obscure wording: most of it is actually written/read in two different languages that often say quite different things. For example, the term *zokutai* ("profane body") written in Chinese characters is glossed in *kana* as *makoto no sugata* ("true aspect").[24] This probably serves several different agendas: to give the text more symbolic value by its obscurity and initiatory quality; to mark it off from other Shintō discourses developing at the time; and to exploit explicitly the possibilities of language in order to point to higher initiatory principles. The structure of the text is quite loose: there is a general lack of discursive and thematic coherence, and the same subjects are discussed over several fascicles. The *Reikiki* appears to be a collection of a wide range of writings and documents: cosmogonic accounts, charts of lineages, deity names, myths and narratives of various kinds (often only referred to, not recounted in full), ritual instructions, esoteric Buddhist doctrines, and so on. These are associated following a logic that is not very clear; its fragmented nature gives the text a strangely postmodern flavor.

Ontology, epistemology, and soteriology

Given the variety of topics addressed in the *Reikiki*, it is not easy to summarize its content; however, something close to a compendium (albeit a very cryptic one) can be found in the twelfth scroll of the text, entitled:

Manifestation of the Otherworld Deities
"The *Reikiki* of the Representation of the Three Worlds"

(The superscript renders the way in which the Chinese characters of the title are glossed in *hiragana* by an authoritative commentator, the previously mentioned Shōgei.) Already from the title we understand that we are dealing with a complex semiotic apparatus, in which expressions have several (and at times contrasting or even incompatible) meanings, mobilized to deal with complicated issues.

The chapter deals with the process of cosmic differentiation that began with the separation of heaven and earth and the formation of the two respective cosmologic principles (Ch. *yin* and *yang*). This ontologic differentiation corresponds, on an epistemologic plane, to the development of knowledge as discrimination; this lies at the origin of delusion and, ultimately, of suffering as defined by Buddhism. The chapter explains that two elusive deities, Kōmyō Daibontennō (Heavenly King Light Mahābrāhma) and Shiki

Daibontennō (Heavenly King Fire Mahābrāhma), descended from their heaven (the top of the realm of Sahā), to teach sentient beings the way to go back to the original state of undifferentiatedness – and thus, to attain salvation. In practice, salvation is represented as the realization/embodiment/ritual performance of the fact that "the encounter and union of the two elements [Jpn. *ryōbu*] constitute the eternally abiding and unchanging sublime body. One cannot define what comes first and what comes after, the two elements cannot be distinguished; this is the sublime and incomprehensible operation of nondualism."[25] This passage is referred to as a citation from a document entitled *Amefuda shō* ("Notes on the Heavenly Talisman"), to which I return below.

In the overall context of the book, the expression "two elements" (Jpn. *ryōbu*) refers to a complex nebula of meanings, objects, and places, including (not necessarily in order and not in an exhaustive list) the two fundamental *maṇḍalas* of Shingon Buddhism, namely the *maṇḍala* of the womb realm and that of the *vajra* realm, and their respective manifestations of Buddha Mahāvairocana; the two shrines of Ise in which the two *maṇḍalas* find actual manifestations in Japan, and the respective deities (Amaterasu and Toyouke); the two cosmological principles (Ch. *yin* and *yang*); the two divinities who are the protagonists of the twelfth chapter, Kōmyō Daibontennō and Shiki Daibontennō; and the spherical jewel (Jpn. *tama*) and the cylindrical *vajra* club (Jpn. *tokko*). In the passage just quoted above, we glimpse an attempt to expand the meaning of nondualism from a coexistence of two different aspects/entities to an indefinite, indistinguishable, and essentially undifferentiated substance. This rhetorical move is emphasized by the fact that two Mahābrāhma kings are envisioned as non-dual entities themselves.

Mantras play an important role in soteriology as the primordial and unconditioned sound/speech in which the deities utter the essence of their being. Especially in Shōgei's commentary, Buddhist epistemology is an essential factor in the soteriology of the *Reikiki*, as the latter involves a radical transformation of the mind, from discriminatory apparatus into pure mirror. However, it is hard to reject the impression that the *Reikiki* uses a Buddhist terminology to describe a soteriology that is in fact closer to a Daoist-like agenda. Salvation is envisioned as reversion to the primordial One; hence the emphasis of the text on the cosmogonic myths from the *Nihon shoki* (in turn drawn from Chinese, perhaps Daoist, sources). The *Reikiki* reinterpretation of ancient Japanese myths on the creation of the universe in terms of Indian mythology within a Buddhist discursive framework was not a mere rhetoric exercise fashionable at the time. The authors of the text wanted to understand the process of creation, articulation and differentiation of the world in order to put a stop to it and reverse its course back to its original condition – in a process *structurally* similar to what Kristofer Schipper, in the case of Daoism, has defined as "The Return."[26]

In fact, the *Reikiki* aims at offering us a representation of the "original state of undifferentiatedness." Of course, it cannot but be a paradoxical attempt: language cannot represent what lies before the appearance of language and the articulation of reality. Thus, *Reikiki* puts in place a number of semiotic strategies to force language to transcend (deny?) itself in order to represent the unconditioned and the a-, or pre-semiotic. It does it at the level of both expression (signifier) and content (signified) of the semiotic forms its employs. At the level of the expression, different characters-words-concepts are used as synonyms, as an attempt to reduce the multiplicity of signs to one single substance; at the level of the content, it gives several and fragmentary accounts of the original state in terms of its deities, its shape, its qualities. For example, we find several mentions of a primordial deity, variously defined as "god of nothingness" (Jpn. *kyomushin*), "original deity" (Jpn. *ōmoto no mikoto*),[27] "pure and sublime, eternal and abiding dharma-body" (Jpn. *sanze jōjū jōmyō hosshin*).[28] This deity is represented in a spherical or circular shape as a jewel (Jpn. *hōju*, *tama*) and a mirror (in turn connected with the full moon, the enlightened mind, the egg, and the open lotus at the center of the womb *maṇḍala*), but also as a cylindrical, vertical entity variously defined as *vajra* club (Jpn. *tokko*), a halberd (Jpn. *hoko*), a pestle, a reed, and the central pillar of Shintō shrines (Jpn. *shin no mihashira*). At the level of the expression, all sacred objects and entities are in principle called *tama*, a complex term meaning "jewel," "spherical object," and "soul."

In the *Reikiki* we find an oscillation between two different and incompatible positions: one, clearly stated, about the fundamental identity of phenomena with the absolute – or, more radically, the idea that phenomena *are* the absolute – was the dominant intellectual discourse among initiatory lineages in medieval Japan; another position, less clearly indicated, but which nonetheless emerges from time to time to the surface of the text, is that the goal is to overcome the phenomenal dimension of reality to attain the original and primordial condition.

In relation to the first position, the *Reikiki* traces the process of cosmic unfolding from its beginning to the proliferation into the myriad things, and claims that the multifarious phenomenal, differentiated world is in fact the absolute and each entity/phenomenon/sign is a condensation of the original, undifferentiated and absolute totality. It is in this sense that we have to read intimations of identity claiming that all phenomena are identical with the absolute, the original state of the deities (Jpn. *honji*) is identical to its manifestations (Jpn. *suijaku*), and the cosmic process of unfolding is identical with the process of returning to the origin,[29] and the emphasis on the "spontaneous and self-enlightening dharma" (Jpn. *jinen jikaku hō*).[30]

Concerning the second position, on the other hand, the *Reikiki* sometimes rejects the realm of differentiatedness to attain the undifferentiated in the form of the primordial state/god/object/language. Such a primordial state of chaos is called Mahāvairocana before he begins his cosmic preaching.

Mahāvairocana is also identified with the Japanese god Kunitokotachi as the "pure and sublime, eternal and abiding dharma-body."[31] Elsewhere, the original state is expressed as three primordial gods (Kunitokotachi, Kunisatchi, and Toyokunnu), existing with the shape of a jewel turning into a spiritual (i.e. endowed with spirit, Jpn. *mitamashii*) mirror.[32] The mirror here indicates brightness, spontaneity, pervasiveness, and unobstructedness.

Another oscillation is indicated, on a different plane, by the two fundamental dimensions described in the *Reikiki*, namely verticality and sphericity, respectively represented by two primordial objects: the *vajra* club (Jpn. *tokko*/*hoko*) and the jewel (Jpn. *tama*). Also in this case, the *Reikiki* seems to be implementing two different strategies at the same time: either emphasizing the nondualism of *vajra* and jewel, or reducing the two to one single and undifferentiated entity. Logically and doctrinally, monism and nondualism are two different stances; the originality of the *Reikiki* lies perhaps in its attempts to go beyond Buddhist nondualism (as neither monism nor dualism) in gesturing toward an absolute form of monism. In this sense, the *Reikiki* already points toward the limit of the Japanese medieval Buddhist discourse, with its confused indications of a realm that would precede (epistemologically, historically, and soteriologically) the appearance of the first buddha. For instance, the text mentions "the *kami* and Buddhas of delusion in the ten realms."[33] Shōgei explains this oxymoron (deluded buddhas?) by arguing that, as long as the four sacred levels (buddhas, bodhisattvas, self-enlightened buddhas, and disciples of Śākyamuni) among the ten realms are defined *vis-à-vis* the six profane destinations (deities, humans, anti-gods, animals, hungry ghosts, and denizens of hell), the buddhas in this typology of beings are not really enlightened. In other words, enlightenment cannot be defined in relation/opposition to its converse (delusion), because of the explicit dichotomic structure of thought of this definition. True enlightenment is that which precedes all dichotomies, including the very distinction between ignorance and enlightenment. Such original state of mind is implicitly indicated by the *Reikiki* as the primordial state before the separation of heaven and earth.

The original condition presented by the *Reikiki* is a sort of monism that, it should be noted, is not that of Western monotheisms, but a Daoist-like realm of undifferentiated potentiality.[34] It is perhaps for this reason that the intellectual experiment attempted by the *Reikiki* was essentially abandoned during the Tokugawa period. When the intellectual space beyond the limits of Buddhism, only implicitly indicated by the *Reikiki*, began to be actively exploited by a number of social groups and institutions (Confucians, shrine priests, aristocratic ritualists, nativists, Westernizers, etc.), anti-Buddhist discourses were based not on Daoism, a liminal formation in East Asian intellectual world, but on dominant Confucian ideas and representations, as well as on images drawn from ancient Japanese texts (a repertoire the reinterpretation of which the *Reikiki* itself had contributed).

The heavenly talisman and the sacred nature of Japan

The theme of the sacred nature of Japan is one instance of these multiple oscillations in the signifiers and signifieds of the *Reikiki*. The text relentlessly tries to prove that Japan is the primordial *topos*, through discussions of its shape, its direct connection with the primordial deities, and in particular through the mythical and ritual complex constituted by the Ise Shrines. An important element to sanction the sacredness of Japan is the "heavenly talisman" of the *Reikiki*.

Commentators have investigated at length the nature and origin of the heavenly talisman supposedly contained in the *Reikiki*. The *Reikiki shishō* by Shōgei writes that the *Amefuda no shō* is "a writ that fell down from heaven."[35] The *Reiki seisakushō* adds: "In the *Amefudashō* are written things concerning Japan; it is a written document that came down from Brāhma's heaven. It is written in Brāhmi characters."[36] What does this heavenly writ contain? The *Reiki seisakushō* explains:

> It is indicated that in the eighth day of the second month of the fifth year since the enthronement of emperor Ōjin the written characters came to Japan for the first time: it was the poem of the beginning of heaven and earth. The poem was in two fascicles; the first one refers to the heaven, the second one to the earth. One portion of this poem is in the shrine containing the divine body of Ise's god. It still exists. The one I saw was preserved at Uji Treasure House, but is now lost. There was a copy also inside the body of the Great Buddha at the Tōdaiji, but it was destroyed when the image was burned. The author of this poem was the father of Qin Shihuangdi. His name was King Zhaoxiang (Shōshō) of Qin.[37]

Here the reference to the father of the first emperor of China is quite unexpected; it is probably connected to the new styles of official seal writing that developed during the Qin dynasty and that lie at the basis of subsequent Daoist talismans, the models of medieval Japanese talismans.

Another text, *Nihon tokumyō* (The Origin of the Name "Japan"), an appendix to the final fascicle of the *Jingi hishō*, gives us some additional information. As an explanation as to why Tenshō daijin (Amaterasu) descended to Japan, and in particular to Ise, the text reports:

> There are two reasons why the deity stayed in this land. The first reason is that about fifty centimeters below the ground of the shrine there is an emerald stone that reflects the image of those who look at it, and so on (the stone is located in the *ushitora* corner [to the northeast]). It touches the layer of metal [underneath Mount Sumeru]. On this stone is placed a precious sword. This sword is the

> heavenly halberd that created our land, and so on. The second reason is that in this region there is a bay, called Futami no ura commonly written – mistakenly – "Bay of two sights," but whose correct transcription is "Bay where the Talisman is visible." "Talisman" [Jpn. *fuda*] refers to a one-pronged *vajra* talisman located at the bottom of that bay. On this talisman are written the mantric seeds of the thirty-seven [buddhas and bodhisattvas of the central part of the womb *maṇḍala*], and the characters *Dainipponkoku* are inscribed as well. Because of the above two mystic reasons, Tenshō Daijin ultimately decided to reside in this land. The "Writ of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata" that lies on the bottom of the ocean surrounding our country is no other than this holy talisman.[38]

In other words, the central section of the *Reikiki* is no other than this mysterious heavenly talisman (Jpn. *amefuda*), also known as the "Writ of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata," that is supposedly located at the bottom of the sea off Japan. At this point, a detour through medieval sacred geography and political theology is in order.

The *Keiran shūyōshū*, a medieval Tendai encyclopedia, reports the geography of Jambudvīpa as presented by the *Ninnōkyō*, which mentions sixteen big countries, 500 mid-size countries, 10,000 small countries, and countless countries as numerous as scattered grains of millet. However, the *Keiran shūyōshū* continues, "Japan is not one of these latter countries, but an island called Akitsushima. Japan is the divine land [Jpn. *shinkoku*]. As the original land of Dainichi, it has the sacred writ [Jpn. *inmon*]. Those who are born in this country will be freed from *saṃsāra*."[39] That Japan was the original land of Dainichi (*Dainipponkoku* = *Dainichi no honkoku*) – as also the *Nihon tokumyō* mentions – was a notion also spread by more popular texts, such as the *kōwakamai* entitled *Nihongi*.[40] Medieval authors were trying to erase the liminality to which Buddhist cosmology condemned Japan. They emphasized a supposedly Japanese uniqueness in terms of salvation, and accordingly described Japan as a paradise on earth.[41] Other texts pushed the sacredness of Japan even further. Divine protection was no longer a sole matter of salvation, but implied protection from the enemies. The *Keiran shūyōshū* states: "Our country is at the center of the universe [Jpn. *sanzen daisen sekai*]. Because of the protection accorded by Dainichi [Jpn. *shinnō*] and the various deities [Jpn. *shinmei*], it will never be attacked by any foreign country."[42]

Several medieval texts dating back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries report that when the two archaic gods Izanagi and Izanami churned the primordial ocean to make the islands of Japan, the five-syllable *mantra* "a bi ra un ken," the most sacred and powerful spell of Buddhism, appeared. At that moment, a wondrous wind blew, and the "Pentagonal Island" (Awaji island in central Japan) was created.[43] In yet another version, it was Dainichi

in person who wielded the heavenly halberd to create Japan.[44] A more famous variant for this story is narrated in Mujū's *Shasekishū*: in this case, it is Ise's goddess, Amaterasu, who is looking for the sacred spell.[45] Known as the "Writ of Mahāvairocana Tathāgata" (*Dainichi Nyorai no inmon*), the five-syllable mantra represents the enlightenment of Dainichi and, at the same time, the semiotic structure of the universe. Another textual tradition interprets that formula as representing the womb *maṇḍala* (Jpn. *taizōkai mandara*). The five-syllable mantra is, in fact, the matrix of the twofold *maṇḍala*, as explained by Kakuban in his *Gorin kujimyō himitsushaku*.[46] As Yamamoto Hiroko points out, several variants of this myth were circulating in medieval Japan.[47] For example, the *Keiran shūyōshū* interprets Mahāvairocana's writ as "the golden light of the three wheels." "Three" stands for the three sections of the womb *maṇḍala* (buddha, lotus, and *vajra*), but also for the three circles with which the *shittan* (Skt. *siddham*) character "*i*" is written, usually associated with the Tendai combinatory deity Sannō and, by extension, with Mt. Hiei and Tendai Buddhism in Japan. The *Keiran shūyōshū* subjects "wheel" to numerous associations. In addition to being the primary symbol of the universal ruler (Skt. *cakravartin*), it also stands for the attribute of one of the five buddhas generated by the head of the buddha known as *Ichiji kinrin butchōson* (*cakravartin* buddha-head with one mantric syllable inscribed on it), in which case the writ would be the mantric seed "*bhrūṃ*" (Jpn. *boron*). In other words, the sacred formula was used by Kōjū to bring together the figure of Mahāvairocana, the supreme wisdom of the buddha, the universal ruler represented by the Japanese sovereign, and solar symbolism traditionally associated with Amaterasu – all centered on the territory of Japan. In yet other versions, the sacred writ is not explicitly mentioned, but the quinary symbolism, this time associated with the essence of the *vajra maṇḍala*, is preserved.[48] These creation myths mean that, as Yamamoto Hiroko puts it, "primordial Japan was created out of the truths of tantric Buddhism."[49] Thus, Japan was envisioned by medieval scholars as the original land of the cosmic Buddha: the official name of the country, the "Country of Great Japan" (Jpn. *Dainipponkoku*) was read as the "original land of Dainichi" (Jpn. *Dainichi no honkoku*). As such, Japan was the semiotic synthesis of the universe, a geopolitical *maṇḍala*, the most sacred country on earth.

To sum up, the heavenly talisman of the *Reikiki* was supposed to be a secret talisman written either in Qin style seal calligraphy or in Sanskrit. It is supposed to contain a formula that produced the creation of heaven and earth, most likely a series of *mantras*. There were several copies of this talisman: one was off-limits in the *sancta sanctorum* of Ise Shrine, another was inside the Great Buddha of the Tōdaiji but was destroyed by fire; a third one used to be in Uji treasure house (an earthly reproduction of the Dragon Palace), but is now lost; a fourth copy, as we will see, was found by emperor Daigo at the imperial palace. Finally, the talisman got copied in

the *Reikiki*, in all its copies, and in all the commentaries and their replicas quoting it.

However, the talisman's writing alone is not all. Most related texts insist that the sacredness of Japan is marked not only by the presence of such original writ, but also by the very shape of its territory. Japan's sacred nature manifests itself in the very shape of the country: medieval Buddhist documents represent Japan either as an eight-petal lotus flower such as the one at the center of the womb *maṇḍala*, as in the *Sendai kuji hongi*,[50] or, more often, as a one-pronged *vajra*, the main ritual implement of tantric Buddhism, as in the *Reikiki*, the *Keiran shūyōshū*, and the *Yamato Katsuragi hōzanki* – that is, medieval texts dealing with *kami* cult matters.[51] The *vajra* is envisioned as the heavenly halberd used by the founding gods of Japan. This motif is repeated several times in the *Reikiki*, where it is in fact one of the leading metaphors.

Medieval authors, heavily influenced by esoteric Buddhism, interpreted the one-pronged *vajra* as a transformation of the "tathatā realm" (Jpn. *shinnyokai*); it becomes a divine wind, which condenses in gods (Jpn. *kami*) and in the spirit of human beings. In esoteric Buddhism, *vajra* has two primary and three secondary meanings. The primary meanings are "hard" (it refers to the substance, Jpn. *tai*) and "useful" (it refers to the function, Jpn. *yū*). The secondary meanings include "indestructible" (substance), "treasure among treasures," and "victorious weapon" (the latter two refer to function).[52] Furthermore, there are five kinds of *vajra*, corresponding to the five wisdoms of the buddha (Jpn. *gochi*).[53] In addition, the *vajra* – the one with one prong – is traditionally associated to the subjugation of enemies and the establishment of a purified, sacred dimension.[54] The *vajra*, a condensation of the *maṇḍala* with the same name, symbolizes the cosmic substance, its power, and its essence – that is, enlightenment.[55] In other words, medieval Buddhist exegetes constructed the land of Japan as a motivated sign – a symbol encompassing the entire tantric Buddhist episteme. Semiotics operations (manipulations of language, signs, meanings) played a key role in this. If Japan was a *maṇḍala* (or, more precisely, a *vajra* – one of the ritual implements that constitute one of the four modes of *maṇḍala*), everything in it was sacred as a direct manifestation of the Buddhist truth.[56]

Reikiki as ritual template

So far we have seen how even a short text could be related to a vast transtextuality in order to sanction its own sacredness – while pointing to a certain ideological vision of the realm. But this is not the entire story. The heavenly talisman in the *Reikiki* also played an essential ritual function as related to the transmission of initiatory knowledge about the *kami* (in ceremonies generally known in Japanese as *jingi kanjō* or *shintō kanjō*) that took place within a Buddhist framework in medieval and early-modern Japan.

The Pure Land priest Shōgei (1341–1420), well versed in Shingon and Yogācāra doctrines and deeply interested in *kami* issues, wrote in his commentary to the twelfth fascicle of the *Reikiki*: "According to an oral instruction (Jpn. *kuden*) the origin of initiation (Jpn. *kanjō*) is to be found in this fascicle."[57] The *Reiki seisakushō* reiterates: "It is indicated that the origin of *kanjō* is to be found in this [i.e. the twelfth] fascicle."[58] In his *Jindaikan shikenmon* the Tendai priest Ryōhen (late fourteenth-early fifteenth centuries) wrote: "what Shingon calls *kanjō*, Shintō calls *reiki*"; *reiki* is thus "a different term for *kanjō*."[59] Thus, the commentators make an explicit connection between the origin of Shintō *kanjō* and the *Reikiki*, in particular its twelfth fascicle. But how did the talisman come to be included in the *Reikiki*? And what is its function in the text? The *Reikiki kikigaki*, exposed by Ryōhen and written down by Raishun, gives us some precious information. The text opens with the following words:

> The origin of this text [*Reikiki*] is as follows. One day during the reign of the sixtieth human sovereign, emperor Daigo, from the pond in the Shinsen'en a beautiful woman emerged and went to the Palace, and told the deep meanings of Shintō and the customs of Japan. The listeners were stunned, and those who saw her were speechless; compared to her, Yanzi and Linglin were almost ridiculous.[60] People wondered whether she was a manifestation of both Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. Then, she transmitted to the emperor the most profound and secret Dharma, the so-called *Amefuda no maki*. That text should not be transmitted easily even to the most noble lantern of the Dharma. Only one disciple should receive this initiation. . . . This book [*Reikiki*] is made of eighteen fascicles. The Heavenly Talisman is an absolute and unconditioned talisman. The remaining seventeen fascicles contain the sayings of the dragon deity and Kōbō Daishi, or of Dengyō Daishi and Gyōki. The words of the dragon deity were recorded by emperor Engi (Daigo).[61]

Here we find an interesting variation on the parable of the dragon girl from the *Lotus Sūtra*, with the important difference that the dragon here addresses the emperor of Japan about his country's customs and about "Shintō." In this case, she offers not a jewel, but a sacred text, the heavenly talisman, which acts as a double of the jewel/relic as a powerful means for salvation.

Ryōhen attempted to explain the appearance of the dragon woman. He wrote:

> The matters of the age of the gods had been forgotten and no one knew them any longer. Even the emperors, who kept the three sacred regalia, handed down from one generation to the other, did no longer know their meaning. One day, the emperor Engi

> (Daigo) asked representatives of all Buddhist schools in the kingdom, but even they did not know. In particular there was a one-page text, but its meaning was unknown. The emperor, saddened, one day prayed to the buddhas and the *kami* [to answer his questions], and finally a woman dressed in blue emerged from the pond of the Shinsen'en and taught him. She was an emissary of Tenshō daijin. The text in question was the twelfth fascicle of the *Reikiki* titled *Amefuda no maki*.[62]

This mysterious woman told emperor Daigo: "You revere Buddhism, therefore it is good for you to learn about Shintō according to the writings of the patriarchs who spread Buddhism in Japan."[63] According to Ryōhen, the *Reikiki* is the transcription of the teachings of the dragon woman to the emperor, as based on texts by Kōbō Daishi, Dengyō Daishi, Gyōki, and so on.

In the commentary to the chapter in question, the twelfth fascicle of the *Reikiki*, Ryōhen says: "This fascicle is the most profoundly secret; therefore, it should be transmitted only to one person."[64] He also explains that the part of the text marked as a citation from the *Amefudashō* is the actual *Amefuda no maki* transmitted by the dragon deity to emperor Daigo.[65]

As convincingly argued by Ogawa Toyoo, the twelfth chapter of the *Reikiki* is essentially the original (and illusory) form of Shintō *kanjō*.[66] The final part of the text, in particular, is meant to reproduce the various phases of the initiation ritual marked by the series of mantras and related visualizations.[67]

Here I would like to note that the combination of Mahāvairocana's writ on the bottom of the ocean with the myth of creation of Japan even became the subject of a visualization in a Shingon Shintō *kanjō* ritual:

> In the ocean there is the character "*vaṃ*," it becomes a drop of water. The water turns into Japan (*Dai-nichi-hon-koku*); inside it there is the character "*haṃ*," which becomes the ground and the mountain of the gods. Pine trees and cedars cross their branches and rivers begin to flow. . . . On the rock below is the character "*a*"; it turns into the floor of hell. On it there is a *mifunashiro* [the boat-shaped container of the support of the mirror, the most sacred object at Ise Shrine], on it there is the syllable "*hṛīḥ*," which turns into an eight-petal lotus flower. On it there is the character "*a*," which turns into the sun disk. . . . This is the seat of Ōhirume no muchi.[68]

In this visualization, the sacred writ is used as a starting point for a visualization in which the practitioner, as in a virtual reality experience, passes from the undifferentiated chaos to the creation of Japan – which becomes the ground for enlightenment – to references to ancient myths from the

Nihon shoki, to the final identification with Ōhirume no muchi, that is, Amaterasu. In this ritual, the writ plays an obvious salvific role; but what is interesting is the sacralization of Japan through a combination of esoteric Buddhist doctrines, practices, and vocabulary, and themes from ancient myths. Ideas about the sacredness of Japan were put into practice in this kind of combinatory ritual known as Shintō *kanjō*.[69]

The practice of sacred texts

Texts like the heavenly talisman from the *Reikiki*, Buddhist scriptures, works of famous masters such as the *Shōbōgenzō*, can be (and were) used as sources for doctrinal analyses, ritual instructions, or both. Essentially, however, they are closer to other sacred objects such as relics, icons, amulets, and talismans than to texts as we conceive of them today. Elsewhere I have developed a model to explain the different attitudes toward semiotic entities within the medieval Japanese episteme. In particular, I distinguished between three different orders of significance, which are also related to three different "regimes of reading," namely semiosophia, semiognosis, and semiopietas.[70] "Semiosophia" refers to the exoteric vision according to which signs are arbitrary and illusory, but can be used for religious purposes as skillful means (Skt. *upāya*, Jpn. *hōben*). "Semiognosis" refers to specific doctrines and practices that are claimed to be extracted from signs themselves and that can produce either religious salvation or material benefits in this world. This is the level of initiatory knowledge concerning structure, function, and power of the esoteric symbols constituting the intellectual content of esoteric initiation and the key to religious attainment. Finally, "semiopietas" is made up of the non-initiatory and uninformed beliefs and practices concerning esoteric signs such as buddha-images, pilgrimage sites, and talismans.

In terms of texts and regimes of reading, a semiosophic approach considers a text as a vehicle for religious and doctrinal meaning. The focus of semiosophia is the signified, and less so the signifier and the strategies of signification. Semiopietas treats a text as a magical object able to generate worldly benefits without explaining such power. Semiognosis, in contrast, treats a text as a microcosmic religious machine. Its salvific power is produced by various kinds of semiotic operations, mainly directed at transforming written signs into kinds of *replicae* of their objects, so that the practices in which they occur are considered identical with their goals.

Esoteric textual practices consist mainly in visualization and ritual manipulation of mantric expressions (Skt. *mantra*-*dhāraṇī*, Jpn. *shingon*-*darani*) and other complex symbols (Skt. *mudrā*, and ritual implements, images, space, and so on) of various kinds, whose very structure, organized on three deeper levels of significance (Jpn. *jinpi*, *hichū no jinpi*, and *hihi*-*chū no jinpi*), appears to the initiated person as an inscription of the path to salvation and the

attainment of perfection (Skt. *siddhi*).[71] In this way, salvation is "extracted" from the signs in which it is inscribed; the liturgical use of certain sacred texts according to the proper initiatory rules *is* "becoming buddha in this very body" (Jpn. *sokushin jōbutsu*). Proper to semiognosis are also its combinatory and correlative logic and practices (Jpn. *shūgō*), which lay at the basis of Japanese medieval religiosity. As Allan Grapard also pointed out, the esoteric interpretation of reality was governed by operations on the substance (both graphic and phonetic) and the meaning of sacred texts.[72] Such a combinatory reduced a multiplicity of concepts and objects to a singular entity, but at the same time it also exposed the plural and complex nature of apparently singular entities.[73]

A general model of medieval Japanese sacred texts can be found in talismans – that is the reason why I have chosen that specific passage from the *Reikiki* as the main source for this chapter. Talismans and sacred texts existed primarily not to be interpreted: their language is archaic and abstruse and meaningless without extensive commentaries. (In the esoteric Buddhist tradition, commentaries are supposed to be translations in religious or philosophical language of the spiritual essence of the universe.) Texts of this kind, especially the "secret texts" (Jpn. *hidensho*), functioned mainly as ritual objects and accordingly had to be ritually employed. They were handed down in a strictly controlled fashion from master to disciple as symbols of spiritual achievement, legitimacy and orthodoxy. They were manipulated as amulets, as condensations of cosmic power – cosmic power that was "translated" into various semiotic materials (paintings, narratives, even inscribed in mountains). Finally, they were used to communicate directly with the deities through ritual practice.

What kind of semiosis is implied by this kind of talismanic communication with the realm of invisible potencies? In a way, a talisman does stand for something else, namely its unconditioned original, a god, or a sacred place, or even the primordial cosmic energy. However, these entities are not "signified" by the talisman, since there is no proper "signified" corresponding to the talismanic signifier – the talisman *is* those entities, to which it must be reunited, in order to be effective, through ritual action. As a coagulation of the cosmos, the talisman is in itself a microcosm or, as Giorgio Raimondo Cardona calls it, a *pentaculum*, a magical object constructed around an interplay between macrocosm and microcosm, one that ensures control of cosmic forces.[74] As Cardona explains, this particular form of text is a model that reproduces cosmic forces and events that are present in the materiality of the texts itself. No interpretive strategies develop to explain the talismans – or if they do, these explanations are just provisional efforts to show the cosmic structure of the talisman and its function in ritual. In other words, talismans are made not to be interpreted, but to be used in order to produce certain effects. This is a case of a sort of "illocutive" act (a manipulation of language in order to produce certain effects, or changes in

the world). In this case, however, it is one that pertains not to "speech," but rather to "writing" – if it is possible to suggest a theory of the illocutionary and perlocutionary effects of *written* speech acts.[75]

To put this in different semiotic terms, we are dealing here with a logic of ostension. Ostension "occurs when a given object or event produced by nature or human action (intentionally or unintentionally and existing in a world of facts as a fact among facts) is 'picked up' by someone and *shown* as the expression of the class of which it is a member."[76] A text can thus be understood as a *double* of its author (human or divine), as when a cigarette is shown "in order to describe the properties of a cigarette,"[77] as an *example*, an object that "is selected as a whole to express its class,"[78] and as a *sample*, as "when only part of an object is selected to express the entire object (and therefore its class)."[79] A sacred text was understood as an ostensive sign of the author – and, ultimately, of the real.

It is not surprising, then, that texts understood in such a way according to the medieval Japanese episteme were often transmitted in complex ritual practices known as *kanjō* (consecration rituals). In esoteric Buddhism *kanjō* is the ritual in which an adept is consecrated to the deepest truths of a certain text or doctrine. As we have already seen, *mikkyō* (esoteric or tantric Buddhism) envisions all semiotic entities as endowed with four levels of meaning, one superficial and three secret. *Kanjō* is the proper way to sanction the transmission of the secret meanings. Initially, *kanjō* was performed only to hand down esoteric Buddhist texts and doctrines, but in medieval Japan it became the paradigmatic form of transmission of all important texts and knowledge in general. Thus, we find initiation rituals on Shintō texts and doctrines (*Nihonshoki*, *Reikiki*), known as Shintō *kanjō* (or Jpn. *jingi kanjō*), and on literary texts such as poetry collections and the Ise monogatari (Jpn. *waka kanjō*).[80] In certain cases there was no actual consecration, but different rituals for the transmission of a secret knowledge or know-how concerning, for example, performing arts (*Nō*), professional tools,[81] and so forth. Such rituals were known as *kuden* (oral transmission) or *hiden* (secret transmission). The reason for the development of such rituals is not known. I believe it is a consequence of the systematic mandalization carried out in medieval Japan by esoteric Buddhism as a way to spread its epistemic field and acquire a sort of cultural hegemony. In such an epistemic framework, each text, each cultural artifact, including non-religious ones, was understood as a potential esoteric symbol endowed with several levels of meaning and with secret knowledge. The attainment of such a secret knowledge was a soteriologic goal, since it was equivalent to the attainment of salvation and a promise of worldly benefits (outside of the religious world, this translated as professional and artistic success). In this sense, *kanjō* rituals were the natural complement of semiognosis – which, as we have seen, is a form of salvific knowledge extracted directly from the signs. Because of the nature of such knowledge, not everyone was entitled to receive it.

Initiation rituals, with their strict regulations, functioned as devices to control access to and the proliferation of meaning and knowledge.

The scriptural model and the ontology of texts

We have seen that the *Reikiki*, and particularly its twelfth fascicle, the "Heavenly Talisman," played several different functions. It had a theoretical content, but that was not the main factor in its diffusion and use. It worked as a cosmological model, a representation of the sacred, a ritual template, a condensation of enlightenment, a magical tool, a ritual implement, and a token of initiation. The nature of the *Reikiki* as a "magical text" closely resembles that of Buddhist scriptures. Buddhist scriptures too had a value that went far beyond their conceptual meaning: they had all the features we have identified as proper to the *Reikiki*. In particular, a direct precedent can be found in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* as it is presented in medieval stories about the diffusion of esoteric Buddhism in Japan. According to a legend dating back at least to Gyōnen's *Sangoku buppō denzū engi* (1311), the Shingon patriarch Śubhakarasiṃha (Ch. Shanwuwei, Jpn. Zenmui, 637–735) went to Japan around 728–729 to spread esoteric Buddhism. He built a hut on a small hill southwest of the future site of the Tōdaiji in the place where later Kūkai would build the Shingon'in. Since Śubhakarasiṃha did not find anyone with the capacity to understand his teachings, he built a *stūpa* east of Kumedera in Yamato Province and buried a copy of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* under its main pillar, in the hope that in the future someone with special karmic affinities to this text would discover it. According to Gyōnen, it was Kūkai who one day found the scripture. He tried to read it, but was not able to understand it, so he decided to go to China in quest for the dharma.[82]

In other words, the *sūtra* is, in a very concrete and direct way, the primary access to Buddhism. The mechanism described in the story above is well known. It is the basis of many practices, from the burial of scriptures (Jpn. *maikyō*, particularly important in the Heian period) to the supposed discovery of secret scriptures in medieval Tibet.[83] It could also be indirectly related to the practice of inscribing entire scriptures on a given sacred territory, as described by Allan Grapard.[84] It is interesting to note that the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, like the *Reikiki*, is a cosmological model as the condensation of the universe; it also has an important ritual component, especially in its last fascicle, which is believed to have been the result of a direct manifestation.

The legend of the indirect encounter between Kūkai and Śubhakarasiṃha, mediated by a buried scripture, can also be understood as a metaphor of the medieval way to access and use sacred texts. Texts are meaningless in themselves; what really matter are the manifold ascetic practices associated with them, the initiation process to receive them, the status that one acquires by owning them. In this sense, texts (and scriptures in particular, but also

commentarial works) are more than mere books: they function as ritual and magic objects. It is for this reason that many texts in East Asia tell of countless miracles performed by the scriptures themselves.[85] Our next task, then, is that of investigating the ontological nature of sacred texts.

The *Reikiki* mentions the "eternal and vast preaching" (Jpn. *jōgō seppō*) of some deities. It is interesting to note that the attribute "eternal and vast" (Jpn. *jōgō*) also defines the original version of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, the so-called "absolute, vast and eternal recension" (Jpn. *hōni jōgō-bon*).[86] This version, which is coextensive with the entire dharma-realm, is also the "textual" form of the preaching of the dharma-body (Jpn. *hosshin seppō*), an eternal sermon of cosmic dimensions theorized by the Shingon tradition. Such a sermon, constituting the core of esoteric Buddhism, is "transmitted through letters (Jpn. *mon*) which spontaneously appeared in the sky and among men"[87] – as Kūkai wrote referring to the appearance in the sky of the Sanskrit syllable "*a*" as the result of esoteric practice.[88] According to an Indian doctrine, reported in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Sanskrit letters are not the product of conditioned causation, but spontaneous and autonomous (Jpn. *hōni jinen*) entities.[89] In this way, Buddhism – and esoteric Buddhism in particular – is intrinsically superior to other teachings because of the ontological status of the linguistic medium that transmits it. While non-Buddhist teachings are based on conventional and arbitrary sign systems, Buddhism is conveyed by an unconditioned and spontaneous language. While the language of non-Buddhist teachings is fallacious, esoteric Buddhism is able to represent the essence of things. In particular, *mantras* constitute the true language because, as Kūkai wrote, "it alone can designate infallibly the reality of objects as they truly are."[90]

It is in this philosophical context that we have to interpret the heavenly talisman of the *Reikiki*. As part of the "eternal and vast" sermon of the founding deities, it is a condensation of the entire universe. Its manifest, written form is not a degeneration of its original, but a semiotic translation that does not affect its content and power. After all, esoteric signs (and *mantras* in particular) are themselves absolute and unconditioned entities.

Predictably, the idea that language and signs are originally unconditioned and spontaneous entities, and also the pansemiotic episteme of medieval Japan, affected conceptions concerning the text, and sacred scriptures in particular. Let us return to the recensions of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* mentioned above. Kūkai wrote, elaborating on ideas circulating in the tantric Buddhist tradition:

> There are three versions of this *sūtra* [*Mahāvairocana Sūtra*]. The first is the spontaneous and unconditioned (Jpn. *hōni*) and permanent text – that is, the *dharmamaṇḍala* of all buddhas. The second is the large version circulating in the world – that is, the *sūtra* in a hundred thousand verses transmitted by Nāgārjuna. The third is

> the abbreviated text of some three thousand verses. Even though it contains three thousand verses in seven fascicles, this abbreviated version embraces the larger ones as the few contains the numerous. One character contains unlimited meanings; one single stroke contains innumerable truths.[91]

The original and complete text of the scripture is the entire universe. The idea that the entire universe is a *sūtra* actually appears in India in the Avataṃsaka philosophy systematized in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra* (Jpn. *Kegonkyō*).[92] This scriptural modality of the universe is defined by Kūkai as the *dharmamaṇḍala* (Jpn. *hō mandara*), one of the four kinds of *maṇḍala* in which the esoteric cosmos is structured. The *dharmamaṇḍala*, in particular, simultaneously represents and manifests the linguistic and graphic modality of existence of the cosmos. This modality is conceived of by Kūkai as "spontaneous and unconditioned (Jpn. *hōni*) and permanent" – a veritable absolute entity coextensive with the body of the dharma-body. The second recension of the scripture is the written text supposedly transmitted by the mythological figure Vajrasattva to the philosopher-bodhisattva Nāgārjuna inside the Iron Stūpa in Southern India. This recension is an abridged semiotic translation in human language of the cosmic text.[93] The third recension of the *sūtra* is a further abbreviation transmitted to East Asia and translated into Chinese by Śubhakarasiṃha.[94] What unites these three versions is a logic not "of abridgment but of condensation."[95] In fact, the three versions are not separate entities but "three mutually inclusive levels of the same *sūtra*."[96] As Ryūichi Abé explains,

> Kūkai's text strives for totality not in its representation. His model of the text is not encyclopedic, for it is neither self-contained nor completed. On the contrary, Kūkai approaches the text as a yet-to-be-bound – or, perhaps more appropriately, never-to-be-bound – constantly reworked manuscript . . . the world is made of texts and only of texts – not of their representational function but of their materiality.[97]

This is a very productive suggestion that forces us to revise our received ideas of texts and textuality. Esoteric Buddhist scriptures – and Buddhist texts in general – did not have a solely cognitive function. They needed to be constantly reworked: in commentaries, in rituals, in painting and in literary works. As such, they generated a boundless proliferation of sense. However, it is also true that the scriptural text *was* closed, after all, as a replica – or, rather, as a textual modality of existence – of the entire universe. What mattered was the materiality of the texts themselves, a materiality that generated labor (semiotic, manual, ritual, performative). Labor is an

important metaphor for textual production within the medieval Japanese episteme strongly influenced by esoteric Buddhism. For example, Kūkai was fond of comparing scriptures and *maṇḍala*s – the two fundamental and interrelated models of "text" – with brocade: "The *mantras* are the woof, the sacred *mudrās* are the warp, and the *samādhi* is the shuttle; they weave the brocade of the ocean-like assembly [i.e. the *maṇḍala*] greatly admired by sentient beings."[98] The materiality of the text was also expressed by Kūkai in verses:

> Mountains are brushes, the ocean is ink
> Heaven and the earth are the box preserving the *sūtra*s;
> Each stroke of a character contains all things in the universe.[99]

In this way, nature is not the opposite of culture, but, on the contrary, the substance, the materiality of culture, the source of culture's endless productivity of multiple textual formations.

The process of appearance and diffusion of unconditioned textual formations such as "eternal and vast" recensions of scriptures, *maṇḍala*s, and talismans is articulated in three steps.[100] First, there is the occurrence of a primary speech act, in which a supernatural being (such as Buddha Mahāvairocana, or heavenly king Mahābrāhma), in its original modality of existence and immersed in the supreme *samādhi*, preaches the dharma (including teachings about semiotic entities), as is the case of esoteric Buddhist scriptures and the heavenly talisman from the *Reikiki*. This foundational speech act is reinforced by the appearance of a material "text" in the sky as the *maṇḍala* of the two realms or in the sea as "Mahāvairocana's writ." That text operates a primary, unconditioned display. Second, sacred words and signs, with their meanings and their uses, are kept in a *corpus* of revealed texts and their commentaries, the result of a secret knowledge tracing back directly and without changes to the founding deity itself. Third, there is a group of people who have received the initiation to the secret teachings concerning the revealed, unconditioned text and who put these teachings into practice and transmit them. Interestingly enough, the above three steps correspond to the Three Jewels, the core of Buddhism and foundation of the supernatural power of its practices and its signs.[101]

The texts of esoteric Buddhism are thus not just instruments for the interpretation of reality, vehicles of a lofty and sublime communication. Esoteric signs are unconditioned and absolute: this paradox is at the core of the nondualistic esoteric system. As a consequence, esoteric texts properly speaking lose their status of "signs," since they no longer "stand to someone for something else under some respect or capacity," according to the well known definition by Charles S. Peirce. In the medieval Japanese episteme, sacred texts were microcosms, holographs of the dharma-realm.

Notes

1 Recent scholarship has begun to challenge such received assumptions, but in ways that are still tentative and fragmentary but very exciting and promising. See, for example, Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *The Ethnography of Reading*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, eds, *Materialities of Communication*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994. On the other hand, the complexities of "reading" as a cultural phenomenon are the subject of Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading*, New York: Viking, 1996, which is, however, limited to a Western perspective.

2 On Senne and Kyōgō see William Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 8, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, pp. 44–48.

3 Ibid., pp. 49–50.

4 Ibid., p. 48.

5 Ibid., p. 49.

6 Rennyo, in Shinran, *Tannishō*, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1990, p. 94.

7 This citation appears for the first time in Annen's *Shinjō sōmoku jōbutsu shi ki*, probably written between 869 and 885, and deeply influenced the debate on the status and soteriological possibilities of plants and non-sentients in general in Japan; on the subject, see Fabio Rambelli, *Vegetal Buddhas* (Occasional Papers 9), Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2001. On Annen's *Shinjō sōmoku jōbutsu shi ki*, see Sueki Fumihiko, *Heian shoki bukkyō no shisō no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995, pp. 377–421 (an annotated version of the text is on pp. 705–785).

8 See Tanaka Takako, *"Akujo" ron*, Tokyo: Kinokuniya shoten, 1992, esp. pp. 52–57.

9 Iyanaga Nobumi, *Daikokuten hensō: Bukkyō shinwa-gaku I*, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2002, pp. 9–10.

10 For a discussion of blood writing in a different East Asian context, see John Kieschnick, "Blood Writing in Chinese Buddhism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 23/2, 2000, pp. 177–194.

11 For a definition of the distinction between "interpertation" and "use" of a text, see Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979; also id., *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

12 On the economic aspects of the production, acquisition, and circulation of medieval texts, see Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 12, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, esp. pp. 144–148.

13 The oldest one begins with the chapter "*Reikiki* of the Two Shrines of Ise"; the second version begins with "*Reikiki* of heaven and earth" (fourth fascicle in the previous version); copies of the third version do not seem to have a fixed order.

14 The first modern Japanese version of the first six fascicles of the *Reikiki*, a monumental work based on most extant manuscripts of the text, has been published recently: Shinbutsu shūgō kenkyūkai, eds, *Reikiki*, vol. 1, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001.

15 *Reikiki*, printed edition of 1672: see Itō Satoshi, "*Reikiki* ni tsuite," *Kokubungaku*, October 2000, p. 81.

16 Jōshun, *Tendai myōmoku ruijū shō*, quoted in Itō, ibid.

17 Shōgei, *Reikiki shishō*, in Takase Shōgen, ed., *Reikiki shishō*, *Reikiki shūi shō*. Tokyo: Morie shoten, 1933, p. 1.
18 *Reikiki*, Shinbutsu shūgō kenkyūkai edition, p. 293.
19 Itō Satoshi in *Shintō Jiten*, ed. Kokugakuin Daigaku Nihon Bunka Kenkyūjo, Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1994, p. 590d.
20 *Ruijū jingi hongen*, in Ōsumi Kazuo, ed., *Chūsei shintō ron*, Nihon shisō taikei, no. 19, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1977, pp. 101, 119, 121, 122, and passim.
21 *Heibonsha Daihyakka jiten*, vol. 15: 860.
22 Murayama Shūichi, *Honji suijaku*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1974, p. 344.
23 For example, the two main divine protagonists of the *Reikiki* are two unusual deities, Shiki Daibontennō and Kōmyō Daibontennō, who play the role of the original form of the two main deities of Ise, Tenshō Daijin and Toyouke no mikoto. As Ogawa Toyoo has indicated, Shiki Daibontennō (literally, Heavenly King Fire Mahābrāhma) and Kōmyō Daibontennō (literally, Heavenly King Light Mahābrāhma), originate in the *Lotus Sūtra*, where fire and light are simply two attributes of Brāhma. The *Reikiki* interprets these two attributes as referring to two different deities – or, rather, to two different aspects of the same non-dual entity, in line with dominant doctrines of its age: see Ogawa Toyoo, "Chūsei shinwa no mechie: Hensei suru *Nihongi* to *Reikiki* '*Amefuda no maki*'," in Mitani Kuniaki and Komine Kazuaki, eds, *Chūsei no chi to gaku: Chūshaku wo yomu*, Tokyo: Rinwasha, 1997, p. 149. Still other deities that appear in the text are never discussed completely, and are not explained in detail.
24 *Reikiki*, in *Shintō taikei*, Shintō Taikei Hensankai, eds, Tokyo: Shintō Taikei Hensankai, 1977–1994), Ronsetsu hen 1, *Shingon shintō* jō, p. 77.
25 Ibid.
26 Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, esp. pp. 155–159.
27 Both in *Reikiki*, Shinbutsu shūgō kenkyūkai edition, p. 22.
28 Ibid., p. 85.
29 Ibid., p. 24.
30 Ibid., p. 28.
31 Ibid., p. 85.
32 Ibid., p. 86.
33 *Reikiki*, in *Shintō taikei*, *Shingon shintō* jō, p. 50.
34 On Daoist ontology, cosmology, and soteriology, see, for example, Schipper; Norman Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983; Michel Strickmann, *Le taoisme du Mao Chan: Chronique d'une révélation*, Paris: Collége de France, Institut des hautes études chinoise, 1981.
35 *Reikiki shishō*, in Takase, p. 31.
36 *Reiki seisakushō*, in *Shintō taikei*, Ronsetsu hen 1, *Shingon shintō* jō, p. 163.
37 Ibid., p. 163.
38 In *Shintō taikei*, Ronsetsu hen 1, *Shingon shintō* jō, pp. 209–210.
39 *Tendai myōmoku ruijū shō*, edited by Jōshun, in *Tendaishū zensho* vol. 22 (1974–1975), p. 302. On Dainichi's sacred writ, see below.
40 Quoted in Murai Shōsuke, "Chūsei Nihon no kokusai ishiki ni tsuite," *Rekishigaku kenkyū bessatsu tokushū Minshū no seikatsu bunka to henkaku shutai* (November 1982), p. 59.
41 Other medieval documents identify Japan with the mythical Iron Stūpa in south India where the esoteric Buddhist teachings were revealed to this world – thus emphasizing that Japan was indeed a special place for salvation: *Keiran shūyōshū*, T. 76: 865bc. On the secret transmission of esoteric Buddhism inside the Iron

Stūpa, see Charles Orzech, "The Legend of the Iron Stūpa," in Donald S. Lopez Jr, *Buddhism in Practice*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 314–317.

42 *Keiran shūyōshū*, fasc. 6.
43 In *Jingi hishō*, quoted in Yamamoto Hiroko, *Chūsei shinwa*, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998, pp. 86–87.
44 Kōjū, *Keiran shūyōshū*, p. 511a.
45 Mujū Ichien, *Shasekishū* (Nihon koten bungaku taikei 85), Tokyo: Iwanami, 1966, p. 59.
46 In T. vol. 79, no. 2514.
47 Yamamoto Hiroko, *Chūsei shinwa*, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998, pp. 84–94.
48 See, for example, ibid., pp. 92–94.
49 Ibid., p. 87.
50 *Sendai kuji hongi*, quoted in ibid., pp. 95–98.
51 *Keiran shūyōshū*, pp. 519a, 676b; *Tenchi reiki furoku*, in *Shintō taikei*, Ronsetsu hen 1, *Shingon shintō jō*, pp. 126–127; *Yamato Katsuragi Hōzanki*, in Ōsumi Kazuo, ed., *Chūsei shintō ron*, pp. 64–66.
52 Chōshun, *Ryōbu mandara shishō*, last fasc., in T. zuzō 2, pp. 1020c–1021a; Ryōken, *Kangōkai mandara son'i shōshi* fasc. 1, in T. zuzō 2, p. 1117a. On the meaning of *vajra*, see also Thomas B. Hare, "Reading, Writing, and Cooking: Kūkai's Interpretive Strategies," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 49/2 (1990), pp. 253–273.
53 The blue *vajra* eliminates obstacles, the yellow one makes one levitate, the red one puts forth fire, the white one puts forth and also purifies water, and the jasper one neutralizes all poisons.
54 See, for example, *Byakuhō kushō*, fasc. 56, in T. zuzō 6, p. 636a.
55 As Thomas Hare has shown, Kūkai already carried out a remotivation on the basis of principles I have described, see Fabio Rambelli, "Re-inscribing Mandala," *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions*, 4 (1991), pp. 1–24.
56 The *Reikiki* in particular uses Buddhist principles and terms, but to emphasize the sacredness of Japan and the role of the deities in it; the buddhas only play a secondary role. In particular, it emphasizes the figure of Ninigi, the mythological first sovereign of Japan, through a reiterated combination of the symbolism of *vajra* and pestel.
57 *Reikiki shishō*, p. 30.
58 *Reiki seisakushō*, p. 163.
59 Ryōhen, *Jindaikan shikenmon*, in *Shintō taikei*, Ronsetsu hen 3, *Tendai shintō jō*, p. 585.
60 Yanzi was the foremost disciple of Confucius, famous for his morality; Linglin was a mythological member of the Yellow Emperor's entourage credited with the invention of music.
61 Ryōhen, *Reikiki kikigaki*, in *Shintō taikei*, Ronsetsu hen 1, *Shingon shintō jō*, p. 213.
62 Quoted in Ogawa, p. 155.
63 Ibid.
64 *Reikiki kikigaki*, p. 263.
65 Ibid.
66 Ogawa, p. 154.
67 For an account of such ceremonies, with a particular emphasis on Shōgei's commentary of the twelfth scroll of the *Reikiki*, see Fabio Rambelli, "The Ritual World of Buddhist 'Shinto'," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 29/3–4 (Fall 2002), pp. 265–297.

68 *Shintō kanjō gyōhō shidai Taijingū hihō*, quoted in Ogawa, p. 159.
69 On *Shintō kanjō*, see Rambelli, "The Ritual World of Buddhist 'Shinto'."
70 On these three orders of significance, see Fabio Rambelli, "True Words, Silence, and the Adamantine Dance,"*Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 21/4 (1994), esp. pp. 393–397.
71 On mantric expressions as inscriptions of soteriology, see Luis O. Gómez, "The Whole Universe as a Sūtra," in *Buddhism in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez Jr, ed., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 107–112. For an analysis of similar Shingon strategies, see Fabio Rambelli, "Re-inscribing Maṇḍala."
72 Allan G. Grapard, "Linguistic Cubism: A Singularity of Pluralism in the Sannō Cult," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 14 (1987), pp. 211–234; and id., *The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
73 On the plural nature of Tantric symbols and entities in general see James A. Boon, *Affinities and Extremes*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, in particular pp. 79–83.
74 Giorgio Raimondo Cardona, *Antropologia della scrittura*, Turin: Loescher, 1987, p. 181.
75 See ibid., esp. pp. 176–178. On talismans and amulets, although in a different cultural context, see also Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
76 Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1975, pp. 224–225.
77 Ibid., p. 226.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 On these kinds of literary initiations, see Kushida Ryōkō, *Zoku Shingon mikkyō seiritsu katei no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 1979, esp. pp. 523–530; Susan B. Klein, *Allegories of Desire: Esoteric Literary Commentaries of Medieval Japan*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
81 See Fabio Rambelli, "Honji Suijaku at Work," in Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, eds, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, pp. 255–286.
82 Gyōnen, *Sangoku buppō denzū engi*, in *Kokuyaku issaikyō*, vol. XX, pp. 208–211, 292–300. Other versions of the story also appear in *Shingonden* by Yōkai, Dainihon Bukkyō zenshū, 68, p. 5 (hereafter DNBZ); *Genkō shakusho*, 1, pp. 45–47; *Honchō kōsōden*, 3, pp. 59.
83 See article by Janet Gyatso, "Signs, Memory and History: A Tantric Buddhist Theory of Scriptural Transmission," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 9/2 (1986), pp. 7–35.
84 Allan G. Grapard, "The Textualized Mountain – Enmountained Text: The *Lotus Sūtra* in Kunisaki," in *The Lotus Sūtra in Japanese Culture*, George J. Tanabe Jr and Willa Jane Tanabe, eds, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989, pp. 159–189.
85 Stories of this kind can be found in the *Nihon ryōiki*, the *Dainipponkoku Hokke genki*, the *Konjaku monogatarishū*, etc.
86 *Commentary to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, fasc. 1, T 39: 579c; *Dubu tuoluoni mu*, by Bukong, T 18: 899a; the various *Danichikyō kaidai* by Kūkai, in Kōbō Daishi zenshū, 1 (hereafter KDZ), respectively at p. 634, 651, 688.
87 Kūkai, *Bunkyō hifuron* (annotated edition by Fuse Jōkei), in *Kōbō Daishi Kūkai zenshū*, vol. 4, p. 6. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1983. See also KDZ III: 1.

88 According to Fuse, this is a reference to the *Rishukyō* (in T. vol. 8, no. 244: p. 789c).
89 T. vol. 18, no. 848: p. 10a.
90 Kūkai, *Shōji jissō gi*, T. vol. 77, no. 2429, p. 402c.
91 Kūkai, *Dainichikyo kaidai* (hokkai joshin), in Kōbō Daishi chosaku kenkyūkai, ed., *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, Kōyasan: Kōyasan Daigaku Mikkyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1995, 4: 4.
92 See Gómez, "The Whole Universe as a Sūtra," pp. 107–112. See also Fazang, *Huayan tanxuanji* (T. vol. 35: pp. 122a–b); Tamaki Kōshirō, "Kegonkyō ni okeru butsudakan," *Kegon shisō* (Kōza Daijō bukkyō vol. 3), Hirakawa Akira and Kajiyama Yūichi, eds, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1983, pp. 170–172; and Gyōnen *Hasshū kōyō*, DNBZ 3, p. 34a.
93 On the esoteric transmission inside the Iron Stūpa, see Orzech.
94 The same model was applied by Kūkai to other scriptures as well. See Kūkai, Kyōōkyō kaidai, and Rishukyō kaidai in *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, Kōbō Daishi chosaku kenkyūkai, ed., Kōyasan: Kōyasan Daigaku Mikkyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1995, vol. 4.
95 Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 276.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Kūkai, Kyōōkyō kaidai, p. 104.
99 Kūkai, "Yama ni asonde hijiri o shitou no shi," in *Henjō hakki seireishū* fasc. 1, in *Teihon Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, vol. 8: p. 10.
100 See also Rambelli, "Re-inscribing Maṇḍala," pp. 20–21.
101 See Tambiah, particularly, pp. 197–198; id., "The Magical Power of Words," now reprinted in id., *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 22–28.

5

AWAKENING AND LANGUAGE

Indic theories of language in the background of Japanese esoteric Buddhism

Richard K. Payne

Introduction

At the beginning of the Heian era, Kūkai introduced a concept that differed radically from the understandings of Buddhism then found in Japan. This is the idea that the Dharmakāya Buddha Mahāvairocana actively preaches the dharma (Jpn. *hosshin seppō*). The novelty of this idea has often been noted, and David Gardiner has even described it as the "trademark" of Shingon Buddhism.[1] Ryuichi Abé has described this as part of Kūkai's rhetorical strategy, presenting "his transmission as unique and in sharp contrast to all the other forms of Buddhist teaching known to the Buddhist communities of early Heian society under the conventional classifications of vehicles (Skt. *yāna*) as described in Mahāyāna texts."[2]

Abé has identified one of the sources for this idea that the *dharmakāya* preaches as "a vajraśekhara sūtra entitled *Discernment of the State of Enlightenment*."[3] In this text the Dharmakāya Buddha preaches to "countless Buddhas and bodhisattvas" who have issued forth from his own mind. While, on the one hand, this is a "monologue" between the Dharmakāya Buddha and himself, Abé also notes that given the "omnipresence" of the dharmakāya, "the Dharmakāya's discourse takes place in his 'universal palace,' the entirety of the universe, and in the 'palace of Samantabhadra's mind,' symbolic of the intrinsic potential for enlightenment all beings possess."[4] This idea that the *dharmakāya* preaches the dharma points toward a positive valuing of the role of language in the process of awakening.

While the claim that the Dharmakāya Buddha Mahāvairocana preaches may well have served the rhetorically strategic goal of establishing the greater authority of the Shingon teachings, Kūkai's move was based on a history of religious and philosophic ideas about the relation between language and

awakening that reaches back to India. Gardiner has discussed the significance of this claim, pointing out that it is not simply a strategic claim of superiority on the grounds that "my Buddha body is better than your Buddha body."[5] Instead, based on his detailed study of Kūkai's *Benkenmitsu nikyōron*, Gardiner finds the central issue to be "whether or not the absolute realm of ultimate truth is accessible to/compatible with the linguistic and conceptual apparatus of the conventional world." In other words, this is the question of the ineffability of religious truth. This view, along with those held by the Pure Land and Nichiren traditions, subverts the stereotypical image of Buddhism as seeking mystical silence.

In his study of Western mysticism, Michel de Certeau has described the relation between the two views of language – that it can express the highest religious truths and that it cannot – as existing in a kind of oscillation. He traces this to two sources. One is the early Christian tradition in which God has spoken, which means that this revelation in language is the basis for mystical knowledge: "behind the illocutionary tactics that invent 'words for that [revelation],' there is, ultimately, the principle of a 'concord' between the infinite and language."[6] The second source identified by de Certeau is the Greco-Roman tradition, which "leads the mind toward silence . . . and designates with the term 'ineffable' not only a critique of language but its absence; it departs in the direction of an unknown god . . . who silences all thought because he is beyond being."[7] This oscillation can perhaps be understood as an extension of the ideas argued in the *Cratylus*, the Platonic dialogue in which the interpretation of language is framed in terms of a polarity between the conventionalist thesis "according to which names result simply from a convention and an agreement . . . among mankind," and the naturalist thesis "according to which each object has received a 'correct denomination' that belongs to it through a natural appropriateness."[8]

I would like to suggest that this metaphor of oscillation is as accurate for the Buddhist tradition as it is for the Western mystical traditions that de Certeau writes of, and more accurate than the assumption that the Buddhist tradition accords entirely with the Romantic presumption that language is a barrier to direct experience of reality – a presumption that continues to inform contemporary religious studies and its interpretation of Buddhism. As we will see below, the view that ultimate truth is accessible to or compatible with language and cognition has been widespread in India and in the Indian sources of East Asian Buddhist tantra.

Although we are using the term "philosophy of language" here, this should not be taken to mean that any specific, fully articulated, systematic, and logically coherent philosophy of language was transmitted to Japan. Instead, as suggested by Glenn Wallis's recent work on the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, certain ideas about language are implicit in the ways in which extraordinary language, i.e. *mantra*, *dhāraṇī*, *vidya*, and similar forms, is used in ritual.[9] As Talal Asad has noted, "Discourse involved in practice is not the same

as that involved in speaking about practice. It is a modern idea that a practitioner cannot know how to live religiously without being able to articulate that knowledge."[10] In other words, a complete explication of Shingon views of language will require attention not only to the explicit formulations regarding the ritual efficacy of extraordinary language, but also to the conceptions implicit in the ways in which extraordinary language is actually used.

Additionally, while – given the dominant understandings of religion in contemporary Western religious studies – it may seem natural to consider the philosophy of language to be part of the Indic intellectual or cultural baggage that accompanied the more purely religious aspects of Buddhism to Japan, reflection on the formation of the category of religion itself calls this view into question. This latter issue is discussed more fully in the conclusion.

Not only does the idea that the *dharmakāya* preaches have significant ramifications for the philosophy of language, it also has ontological and epistemological ramifications. Within this wide range of interrelated issues, however, the focus of this chapter is the question of the efficacy of extraordinary uses of language within the Indic milieu from which the Shingon tradition formulated its conceptions of extraordinary language. This is not to imply that Kūkai's ideas were purely derivative. However, at the same time it is necessary to avoid the tendency to treat someone like Kūkai as a "religious genius" (a Romantic idealization of the creative artist) who created everything *ex novo*. Instead of either of these extremes, we can see Kūkai as someone who molded a new system out of elements drawn from pre-existing traditions.

More specifically, then, given that the Shingon tradition holds to the efficacy of extraordinary language, my questions are:

1 How did the Shingon tradition itself understand the efficacy of extraordinary language?
2 Where did the idea come from?
3 What was the line of transmission between India and Japanese Shingon?
4 What kinds of changes occured within that history of transmission from India through China to Japan?

In this chapter I focus on the second of these four questions.

To begin to answer this question, we need to start by looking at the dating of the three main *sūtra*s employed in the Shingon tradition: the *Dainichi kyō* (Skt. *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra*[11]), the *Kongōchō gyō* (Skt. *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha Sūtra*[12]), and the *Rishu kyō* (Skt. *Adhyardhaśatikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*[13]).

As Wallis has noted in his study of *mantra* in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, "although certain recognizable Indian cultural and philosophical axioms may be present in a given theory of *mantra*, theoretical presentations always

concern a specific; that is, they are always bound to self-delineated groups, communities, texts, and so on."[14] I agree with Wallis that every conception needs to be located in a specific place – self-delineated group, community, text, and so on. However, the goal here is slightly different. I am attempting to outline the range of conceptions regarding the efficacy of extraordinary language that were the intellectual milieu from which the Shingon tradition formulated its praxis. Admittedly, such broad, sweeping kinds of inquiry are out of fashion, but I hope our own conceptions of scholarship are capacious enough to include not only attention to detailed specifics, but also attempts to see how those specifics fit together into a larger, contextualized whole – for, surely, any fact in total isolation is meaningless.

This inquiry is itself informed by previous work on the *Ajikan* – contemplation of the syllable "*a*."[15] In looking at the way in which that is explained in Shingon, I discovered a high degree of continuity with the explanations found in India. Yet a crucial factor involved is that the Indic explanations depend upon some characteristics of Sanskrit that are not found in either Japanese or Chinese.

The three primary *sūtra* sources for Shingon and their dates

One of the distinguishing characteristics attributed to the tantras is that they are taught by figures other than Śākyamuni Buddha. In the case of the three primary sources for the Shingon tradition, we find that all three are spoken by the Buddha Mahāvairocana.[16] Nakamura Hajime, citing the work of Shinten Sakai, places the *Dainichikyō* in "the middle of the seventh century."[17] Nakamura further suggests that the *Kongōchōgyō* is later, and "came into existence some time between 680 and 690."[18]

The date of the *Rishukyō* as a well established text can be placed in the mid-sixth century. Sakai Shirō based his evaluation of the text's date on the fact that Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* quotes the text as an authoritative *Prajñāpāramītā Sūtra*, and that Candrakīrti is placed in the first half of the seventh century.[19] Although Candrakīrti's dates are uncertain, the placement of the *Rishukyō* to the mid-sixth century is suggested by the fact that the earliest Chinese translation is that of Xuanzang, which Matsunaga Yukei places between 660 and 663. That it was translated and transmitted by Xuanzang establishes that it was already a well established text at the time of his visit to India. This would "indicate a date before the turn of the seventh century. A reasonable lower limit would be the middle of the sixth, with the actual date of composition falling some time before that."[20]

These three texts each claim to be taught by the Dharmakāya Buddha Mahāvairocana, and all date to a period from the middle of the sixth to the end of the seventh century. The *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra* itself gives direct evidence of a concern with the nature of language. In its first chapter, the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra* lists thirty errors accruing to one who does

not properly understand the nature of the self as empty. The last two of these are errors involving misconceptions of the nature of speech, that the self arises from "the expressible or the inexpressible."[21]

Within this general time frame, we need to look not only to Buddhist sources, but also to non-Buddhist sources. For example, Alexis Sanderson has suggested that some of the Buddhist tantras depend greatly on non-dual Śaivism: textually in borrowing nomenclature and piously plagiarizing (the phrase is Sanderson's) large sections of text: both practically – by taking "their wrathful and erotic orientation from Śaiva praxis" – and specifically within the Vajrayoginī cult by an "emphasis on the worship of female deities."[22] While the causal direction suggested by Sanderson is debatable, it is nevertheless the case that non-Buddhist sources are relevant. Similarly, we must also take into account sources that, while falling within the general time frame of the three sūtras, postdate them. Although the sources utilized in the Shingon tradition are earlier (for example, the Vajrayogini cult dates to the tenth to twelfth centuries[23]), the extent of interaction does suggest that non-Buddhist tantric traditions were an important part of the intellectual milieu formative for the tantric tradition in India that provided the basis for Shingon. Again, at this point we are looking not to identify specific lines of influence, but to exemplify the range of attitudes toward language that formed the milieu out of which the three sūtras originated.

Identity of words and things

Johannes Bronkhorst has identified what he feels is a consistent theme regarding language that is found throughout early Indic thought beginning from the Upaniṣads. This is the idea that "words and the things they denote constitute a single unity, and words are not distinct from their objects."[24] Bronkhorst sees this idea as a common thread across a wide scope – from the mythic conception of the goddess Vac, Speech, as the creatrix of the world[25] to the semantics of Panini.[26] As with the oscillation between silence and revelation described by de Certeau, Bronkhorst also identifies a view of language, found, for example, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, that holds the contrary view, one in which "language covers, as it is spoken, the reality which is hidden behind it."[27]

More directly to the point of our inquiry here, Bronkhorst specifically attributes the use of *mantra* to the idea of the unity of words and things: "this conception is expressed in the frequent use of mantras, whether these are Vedic mantras or non-Vedic; mantras are presumed to influence objective reality, the non-linguistic, and that is because of the bond attaching words, and sometimes also sounds, to things."[28]

The foundational character of this view for the formation of Indic thought, including Buddhism – together with the neo-Platonic and Romantic presumptions regarding the barrier language and conceptual thought establish

to direct perception of reality implicit within Western religious thought – suggests that a careful re-evaluation of our understanding of Buddhist views of language is called for.

Hindu conceptions: grammarians, and tantric traditions

In his *Vyākyapadīya*, the grammarian Bhartṛhari asserts that the proper use of *mantra*s "removes all impurities, purifies all knowledge and leads to release."[29] The power of *mantra*s lies in their relation to the Vedas and how the Vedas are related to *brahman* – the absolute reality, which is at the same time the "word-principle" (Skt. *śabdatattva*). Although the significance of this is sometimes taken to mean that *brahman* is composed of *mantras*, Johannes Bronkhorst has argued that the actual meaning in Bhartṛhari's text is that, like everything else, *mantras* are also pervaded by *brahman*.[30] The Vedas are a manifestation of the ultimate word (Skt. *śabda*), in the sense of sound or speech. As David Carpenter has put it:

> For Bhartṛhari the Veda is first and foremost a cosmic reality, the sonic manifestation of the ultimate ground of reality within the world of time and space. This phenomenal manifestation takes the form of powerful speech, the *mantras* and ritual injunctions employed in the Vedic sacrificial rites.[31]

This identification of *mantra*s as the phenomenal manifestation of ultimate reality makes sense of Bhartṛhari's concern with the proper pronunciation of *mantra*s, which if mispronounced would result in wasting their energy. According to Harold Coward's discussion of Bhartṛhari, the importance of grammar derives from the desire to avoid wasting the power of *mantra*s (Skt. *mantra śakti*), rather than a concern with formulating meaningful sentences. Without both correct pronunciation and proper grammatical form, the *mantra*s will be ineffective and the ritual in which they are used will fail.[32] Such a conception appears to have been continuous from the Vedas through to the development of the tantras,[33] and was then carried on to tantric Buddhism in East Asia. Bhartṛhari's concern with proper pronunciation as a key to the efficacy of *mantra* in ritual is echoed by Kūkai's advocacy for the study of the Sanskrit behind the Chinese renderings of *mantra* in order to be able to know the difference between the long and short vowels. In his "A Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported *Sūtra*s and Other Items (*Shōrai mokuroku*)" Kūkai explains why he has brought back not only *sūtra*s in new Chinese translations, but Sanskrit works as well:

> Buddhism originated in India. In India and China, however, circumstances are quite different. The sound system as well as the script is dissimilar. As a result, only through translations can we

> savor the refreshing breeze of Indian spirituality. The mantras, however, are mysterious and each word is profound in meaning. When they are transliterated into Chinese, the original meanings are modified and the long and short vowels confused. In the end we can get roughly similar sounds but not precisely the same ones. Unless we use Sanskrit, it is hardly possible to differentiate the long and short sounds.[34]

Medieval Śaiva siddhānta appears to share this idea, though expressed in light of its own "modified non-dualist metaphysics."[35] As Richard Davis has put it, because Śiva "is described theologically as formless and without limit":

> In his highest state, Śiva is inaccessible to human powers. But Śiva has a secondary level, through which he engages in activities and by which he comes within the range of our knowledge and action. Sadāśiva, Śiva's body of mantras, is the most comprehensive form of Śiva at this secondary level.[36]

In Śaiva siddhanta ritual practice, the *mantra*s that transform the *liṅga* into the body of Sadāśiva to which offerings are made in *pūjā* are the same as those which the practitioner has placed onto his own body:

> The divine body is composed of mantras, unlike the impure, fettered bodies of humans. It does, however, mirror the divine body that the worshipper has already imposed onto himself in *ātmaśuddhi*. Exactly the same mantras transform the ritualist's body as enhance the liṅga. "He should impose mantras on the deity just as he has imposed them onto his own body," directs *Kāmikāgama* (4.349). The resulting bodily parallelism of ritualist and Śiva reinforces the state of relative equality that the two come to share during worship.[37]

This is a ritual action similar to a practice found in Shingon employing *bīja mantra*. This meditation:

> employs five letters [i.e. *bīja mantra*], the letters *a*, *va*, *ra*, *ha*, *kha* to symbolize the five constituent elements that make up the universe, *earth*, *water*, *fire*, *air*, *and space*. . . . One visualizes these five letters as being placed in five spots on his body, from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. These five letters and the five elements are symbols of the universe, and by means of visualizing them with regard to one's own body, a union of microcosm and macrocosm can be achieved.[38]

While in the Śaiva siddhanta understanding of the relation between practitioner and deity as one of "relative equality," in Shingon the practitioner and deity evoked are to be recognized as identical with one another. The Shingon tradition regularly constructs its ritual practice around a mutual interpenetration of the practitioner and deity (Jpn. *nyūga ga'nyū*, Skt. *ahaṁkāra*) through the identification of the practitioner's body, speech and mind with the body, speech and mind of the deity (Skt. *triguhya*, Jpn. *sanmitsu*). Additionally, we should note the difference between Śiva and Mahāvairocana Buddha. Where Śiva has two forms, the higher of which is inaccessible to humans, Mahāvairocana is identified by Kūkai as the *dharmakāya*, and expresses the truth of the dharma in speech.[39]

Mark S. G. Dyczkowski identifies the Spanda school as a monistic Śaivism, which stresses "the importance of experiencing Spanda, the vibration or pulse of consciousness."[40] Its origins trace back to the first half of the ninth century, marking "the beginnings of Kashmiri Śaivism in our modern sense of the term."[41] Kashmir, like Indonesia, played a key role in the development of East Asian Buddhism, and in the interactions that created Buddhist tantra. Kumārajiva is said to have come from Central Asia to Kashmir to study Sanskrit, and Buddhabhadra, another important translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese, was himself from Kashmir. It was from this area that Buddhism was first introduced into Tibet, and important members of the school of Buddhist logicians also came from Kashmir. In terms of the development of Buddhist tantra, and sources of reflections on the nature of language, Dyczkowski notes that:

> About the middle of the first millennium of our era, Tantra began to assume a clearly defined, although immensely varied, identity through the emergence of vast corpuses of sacred literature that defined themselves specifically as Tantric. There can be no doubt, despite the fragmentary and as yet poorly researched evidence, that Kashmir was an important center of a wide range of Tantric cults, both Hindu and Buddhist.[42]

Though the Spanda school itself was not formed until after the dates of our three texts, we may still consider the ideas found within the Spanda school as themselves deriving from earlier conceptions, and representative of the religio-intellectual milieu from which Buddhist tantra arose.

Within the Spanda tradition, language is seen as ambivalent. On the one hand, it plays a central role in the creation of a conceptual realm that ensnares us. On the other, for one who understands the nature of language properly it can serve to liberate. Manifest speech is grounded on consciousness – the phonemes having as their base "phonematic energies (*varṇagrāma*) held in a potential state in consciousness. This 'mass of sounds' (*śabdarāśi*) is the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*) which makes the universe manifest

and contains all things within itself."[43] This internal mass of sounds is seen as corresponding to the "introverted subjectivity of Śiva Himself."[44]

The power that language has is evidenced by its ability to stimulate deep emotions, for example. Again, this power is ambiguous, with its liberative potential being exercised by the practice of *mantra* recitation:

> This power hidden in language, which binds us through the thought-constructs it generates, can also be used to free us of them by channeling it through Mantra. Mantric practice begins at the Individual (*āṇava*) level where Mantras are recited in consonance with the rising and falling away of the breath. In this way they are charged with the vibration (*spanda*) of consciousness and, in their turn, make consciousness vibrate. Serving as a means to concentration, they free the mind of discursive representations.[45]

For the grammarian Bhartṛhari *mantra* can, when properly pronounced in the appropriate ritual setting, make manifest the energy latent with the *mantra* (Skt. *mantra śakti*), an energy that derives through the Vedas from the absolute reality, brahman. Within Śaiva Siddhanta the accessible form of Śiva is his body of *mantra*s, and the practitioner forms his own body of *mantra*s, creating a ritualized state of relative equality. The Spanda school sees the energy released by the phonemes of the *mantra* as being latent within consciousness, and that it is this consciousness-energy that is the source of the universe and everything in it. Other strains of thought within Hindu tantra appear to give more explicit emphasis to the effect of *mantra*s on the subtle body, employing the familiar esoteric physiology of the three channels (Skt. *iḍā*, *pingalā*, and *suṣumnā*), the six *cakras*, and the *kuṇḍalinī* energy that rises up through the *cakras*.[46] Drawing on the eleventh century *Śāradātilaka tantra*, François Chenet delineates three functions of *mantra* recitation: first is the effect of the internal vibration on the breath-energy (Skt. *prāṇaśakti*) and the nerves that it contacts; second, concentration as a mental act affects the spirit; and, third, the external vibrations of *mantra* on the auditory nerves, which link through the cerebral centers, indirectly affect the subtle body.[47] This approach to the efficacy of *mantra* shares the foundational ideas that the vibration of the *mantra* is the "sounding of brahman" (Skt. *śabdabrahman*), and that the consciousness of the guru is the conduit by which the practitioner receives the energy of the *mantra*.

Buddhist conceptions: conventionalism, skepticism, and the use of **mantra**

Reflections on the nature of language are found in the earliest strata of the Buddhist canon. Jens Schlieter points to the *Kālāma Sutta* and the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* as evidence of a nominalist and skeptical attitude toward language.[48]

In the *Kālāma Sutta* the Buddha is approached by residents of the village Kālāma who are confused by the conflicting claims of different priests and contemplatives. He responds to their confusion by telling them to only trust in their own understanding of things, rather than being directed "by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought 'This contemplative is our teacher'."[49] The skepticism evidenced by this quote focuses specifically on authority or testimony (Skt *śabda*), and argumentation (Skt *pramāṇa*), two of the most widely accepted epistemological sources in Indian thought.

The second source cited by Schlieter is the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta*, which is one of the suttas in which the Buddha refuses to discourse on such topics as the eternity of the cosmos as being unconducive to awakening. When asked about the nature of the self, Poṭṭhapāda and the Buddha consider three possibilities: that it is material, that it is mental, or that it is formless. The Buddha likens these three possibilities to the transformations of milk into curds, curds into butter, and butter into ghee. Thus, these three are three different ways of formulating a self, rather than either three different kinds of self, or two mistaken and one correct understanding of the self. Further, the Buddha goes on to say that these three "are the world's designations, the world's expressions, the world's ways of speaking, the world's descriptions, with which the Tathagata expresses himself but without grasping them."[50] Here, rather than a skeptical attitude, we find a conventionalist understanding.

Collett Cox has discussed early Buddhist conceptions of language. She says of the *abhidharma* literature that:

> by proposing the discrete existence of name as a meaning conveying entity apart from sound, the early Buddhist analyses presage later developments in the theory of *sphoṭa* [eternal meaning], though with a distinctively Buddhist flavor that emphasizes the impermanence of names by asserting the consensual origin of the association between names and their referents.[51]

As noted by many authors, there is a strong link between theories of language, ontology, and epistemology.[52] Many of the theories of language that developed within the Hindu tradition assumed some sort of ontological absolute. Such a view is at variance, of course, with Buddhist emphases on the impermanent and essenceless character of existing entities. However, from the perspective identified by Cox, it would be possible to employ *mantra* and *dhāraṇī* without necessarily entailing the notions of unchanging universals found in non-Buddhist theories of language. This establishes a nominalist or conventionalist view from a very early point in the development of Buddhist reflection on language.[53]

A nominalist or conventionalist view would seem to be consistent with the Buddhist rejection of the idea, as Phyllis Granoff puts it, "of a single sacred language, of the concept that Sanskrit is especially privileged because it alone of all languages functions directly to make known its meaning, and of the theory that some language is by nature meritorious while others are by nature wicked."[54] Granoff calls attention to Dharmakīrti as exemplifying this attitude and to Buddhaghoṣa as exemplifying a contrasting attitude: "If Dharmakīrti could argue that all languages were equal and no one language had any special status, it is nonetheless evident that the biography of Buddhaghoṣa reveals a very different attitude towards language."[55] For his part, Buddhaghoṣa privileges not Sanskrit but Māgadhī as "the language of the Buddha, the root language that lay behind all languages, and the language best suited for teaching Buddhist doctrine."[56] Again, the Buddhist tradition evidences an oscillation between attitudes toward language. The complexity of views means that we cannot simply characterize the entire tradition as having one view or another on language and the religious path to awakening.

Glenn Wallis has examined the way in which *mantra* are presented as effective by the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, a compendium that has been compared to the *purāṇa* literature, and at least parts of which have been traced to the eighth century, i.e. slightly after the three texts foundational for the Shingon tradition.[57] Wallis has argued that the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* does not itself present a theory about the efficacy of *mantra*, but instead asserts a conception of mantric efficacy imagistically, showing what a *mantra* does: "the nature of the *mantra* in the ritual manual can only be understood from the images of *mantric* use presented in the text; it can not be known from explicit statements."[58] Fortunately, we can turn to Wallis's explicit statements to understand the way in which the authors of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* understood *mantra* to be effective.

According to Wallis's analysis, *mantra* are considered to be effective because of the power of bodhisattvas to transform themselves (Skt. *bodhisattvavikurvaṇa*) into *mantra*:

> As one of the ten powers of the *bodhisattva* (*bodhisattvabala*), the power of miraculous transformation (*vikurvaṇabala*) is, for the Buddhist engaged in the *Mmk* [Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa], the mechanism generating the mantra. Mañjuśrī, by means of his powers of transformation, becomes the mantra. The mantra is an effective instrument by virtue of its being nothing less than a form assumed by the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī.[59]

This idea that the deity and the *mantra* are in some way identical – found in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and propounded by Bhartṛhari – is also found in the *Flower Cluster of Clear Understanding* (*Abhisamayamañjarī*) by Śākyarakṣita,

which is one of the texts important for the Vajrayoginī cult. Although this cult also postdates the time of the three sūtras foundational to Shingon, it shows how pervasive the idea of the identity of words and things is. In Śākyarakṣita's text, when the body is armored with six *mantra*, the text notes that six *kāpālika* goddesses are to be generated by the practitioner "'because of the indivisibility of the *mantra* and the deity' (*mantradevatayor abhedāt*)."[60]

In the later history of the Buddhist tradition reflection on language and its religious efficacy continued in the Tibetan development of Buddhism. One instance of this is the dGe lugs tradition, where there is a view of language that is at least congruent with that held within the Shingon tradition. José Cabezón has summarized this view, pointing to "one of the most basic axioms of dGe lugs pa hermeneutics; namely, that anything that exists (including any point of doctrine, down to the most subtle) can be expressed by language and cognized by inferential cognition."[61] This view is qualified, however, by the "fact that the Buddha's consciousness is said to be nonconceptual is a clear indication that conceptual thought must eventually be transcended."[62] Given that the Shingon view is that the *dharmakāya* preaches, Shingon conceptions of language and epistemology may not entail this qualification.[63]

As noted by Gardiner, *supra*, the idea that the Dharmakāya Buddha Mahāvairocana preaches implies that language is adequate for communicating the truth of the dharma. This contrasts with those strains within the Buddhist tradition that have held that the highest truths are ineffable and inconceivable – that language cannot express, and ordinary dualistic cognition cannot grasp, the reality of emptiness and interdependence. As a part of mainstream Mahāyāna, this latter view is also found in the Japanese context. These questions were raised by Kūkai's contemporary Tokuitsu (781?–842?). Tokuitsu was a priest of the Hossō (Ch. Faxiang, one of the versions of Yogācāra in China) tradition, who "assert[ed] the Mahāyāna axiom that Dharmakāya is utterly abstract, that it is endowed with no anthropomorphic qualities."[64] The revaluation of the religious efficacy of language may be seen as one of the significant contributions of tantric thought to East Asian Buddhism.

Conclusion

The model of Buddhism as having mystical silence and communion with the One as its goal is overdetermined for us. On the one hand, there are important strains within Buddhist thought that do match that view. On the other, there is the Greco-Roman view described by de Certeau. This continued in medieval Christian neo-Platonism, which in its turn informed Romanticism, and from which much of contemporary Western religious studies draws its presumptions. As mentioned above, the central role of language in Shingon,

Pure Land and Nichiren traditions suggests that the positive views of language in the process of attaining awakening should not be marginalized.

The assertion that language is actively conducive to awakening entails an understanding of the ontology and epistemology of practice that differs radically from the dualistic view familiar from much of Buddhism. This dualistic view distinguishes between a realm of experience unmediated by cognition distinct and the realm of cognitively mediated experience. Within this dualistic metaphysics, awakening is thought to be achieved by the transcendence or elimination of the latter so as to experience a higher or truer reality.

In place of the dualistic conception, this idea that the *dharmakāya* preaches the dharma may suggest a radically non-dual Madhyamaka-style interpretation in which language is conventional and therefore empty – like all existing things – and the emptiness of language can serve as the stimulus to awakening. This, however, is a contemporary interpretation based on present ways of talking about Madhyamaka thought. It is evident, though, that Kūkai was informed by Madhyamaka. His manner of expressing his non-dual understanding of language is found, for example, in his claim "that the Dharmakāya's preaching of the Dharma consists of the three mysteries."[65] In making this claim Kūkai cites the *Commentary on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (Ch. *Dazhidu lun*, Jap. *Daichido ron*) attributed to Nāgārjuna.

Talal Asad has discussed the origins of the contemporary Euro-American conception of religion as a distinct category separate from other forms of discourse, particularly those related to any form of social power. According to Asad, "there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes."[66] Given the contemporary Euro-American understanding of religion, what tends to be privileged in discussions of Buddhism in Japan are "religious elements." This means that, on the one hand, doctrinal aspects, including karma, the decline of the dharma, emptiness, and so on, and, on the other, aspects of practice (that is, meditation and ritual) are what are considered to be religious. Delimiting the religious aspects of Buddhism in this fashion leaves everything outside of that boundary in the realm of culture. Yet it is clear from the great concern that Kūkai gave to language, especially Sanskrit, that he did not consider these aspects of Buddhism as peripheral to its religious value, but at the very center of the way in which Shingon praxis was effective. In other words, the philosophy of language – both implicit and explicit – was not simply cultural baggage.

As has been noted by Glenn Wallis in relation to the cult described in the *Mañjuśrīmulakalpa*, doctrinal positions such as an understanding of the religious efficacy of language are implicit in ritual practice. In other words, the bipolar opposition between doctrine and practice is a relatively artificial one. While it may reflect in a correlative fashion some emic categories, it is

a heuristic distinction and not an ontological one. It is simply not the case that thought and action, or ideology and practice, exist independently of one another and then establish connections or relations.

Finally, it is to be hoped that this kind of attention to the continuity of conceptions regarding the efficacy of extraordinary language from India to Japanese esoteric Buddhism will help to correct the unfortunate disconnect between Indian and Japanese Buddhist studies.[67] This disconnect seems to be based on the area studies model which continues to divide the field of Buddhist studies along artificial geopolitical boundaries, continuing notions of Japanese Buddhist exceptionalism, the fetishization of founders as religious geniuses, and the stylistic orientation of the background research (literary studies in the case of postwar Japan versus scholastic studies in the case of medieval Indian Buddhism). These have led to the current impression that what is called Indo-Tibetan Buddhism is scholastic in character and deals primarily with philosophic issues, while Japanese Buddhism is largely literary in character and lacks any significant scholastic concern with philosophic issues. Reflection on the nature of language is at least one of the important elements of East Asian Buddhist scholasticism.

Giving specific attention to the ways language was understood – both implicitly through use and explicitly in doctrinal formulations – will reveal a great deal of continuity with the Indic intellectual milieu from which the Shingon tradition drew its inspiration. Rather than Buddhism being fundamentally disparaging of the ability of language to lead one to awakening, it seems much more probable that the oscillation described by de Certeau in Western mystical discourse is also to be found in Buddhist reflections on praxis.

Notes

1 David Gardiner, "Kūkai's View of Exoteric Buddhism in *Benkenmitsu nikyōron*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Esoteric Buddhist Culture*, Kōyasan University (1992), p. 201 (reverse numbering). This leads to an understanding of the relation between language and awakening that differs not only from concepts found in Heian Buddhism in Japan, but also from conceptions commonly found in Tibetan Buddhism. In the Tibetan traditions, the role of language in facilitating one's progress along the path to awakening has long been recognized by the dGe lugs pa. While they do not make as radical a claim as that made by Kūkai, they do give positive valence to the role of discursive language and reason in leading one to recognize the truth of impermanence and emptiness. José Ignacio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

2 Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, p. 196.

3 Ibid., p. 194.

4 Ibid., p. 195.

5 Gardiner, "Kūkai's View," pp. 201–200.

6 Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume One: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Michael B. Smith, tr., Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992, p. 115.

7 Ibid., p. 114.

8 Gérard Genette, *Mimologics*, Thäis E. Morgan, tr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995, p. 7. My thanks to Bernard Faure for drawing my attention to the *Cratylus* in relation to Indic philosophy of language.

9 Glenn Wallis, *Mediating the Power of Buddhas: Ritual in the* Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002, p. 31. See also his "The Buddha's Remains," cited in note 14 below.

10 Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 36. See also William S. Sax's comments regarding the examination of worldviews: "As I see it, formal statements about the world and humanity's place in it are based upon certain 'commonsense' assumptions and categories that, like the categories of grammar and syntax, are neither criticized, nor reflected upon, nor explicitly formulated (at least not very often). Because people rarely feel the need to formalize such categories, they generally remain implicit and must therefore be inferred from the languages in which they are encoded, the institutions in which they are embedded, and the thoughts and actions that they have influenced." William S. Sax, *Mountain Goddess: Gender and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 10.

11 T. no. 848, Śubhakarasiṃha and Ichigyō, Stephen Hodge, tr. (from the Tibetan), *The Mahā-vairocana-Abhisaṃbodhi Tantra, with Buddhaguhya's Commentary*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003; Chikyo Yamamoto, tr., *Mahāvairocana-Sūtra*, Śata-Piṭaka Series, vol. 359, New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1990; see also Alex Wayman and R. Tajima, tr., *The Enlightenment of Vairocana*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992.

12 T. no. 865, Amoghavajra tr.; T. no. 866, Vajrabodhi tr.; and T. no. 882, Dānapāla tr., Rolf W. Giebel, tr., "The Adamantine Pinnacle *Sūtra*," in *Two Esoteric Sūtras*, BDK English Tripiṭaka, no. 29-II, Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001.

13 T. no. 243, Amoghavajra tr. For a complete discussion of other translations, see Ian Astley-Kristensen, tr., *The Rishukyō: The Sino-Japanese Tantric Prajñāpāramitā in 150 Verses (Amoghavajra's Version)*, Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1991.

14 Glenn Wallis, "The Buddha's Remains: *mantra* in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 24/1 (2001), p. 90.

15 Richard K. Payne, "The Shingon *Ajikan*: Diagrammatic Analysis of Ritual Syntax," *Religion*, 29 (1999), pp. 215–229, and id., "*Ajikan*: Ritual and Meditation in the Shingon Tradition," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, Richard K. Payne, ed., Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 11, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998.

16 Yamamoto, p. 1; Giebel, p. 19; Astley-Kristensen, p. 39.

17 Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, 1980. Reprint. Buddhist Traditions, vol. 1. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, p. 319.

18 Ibid., p. 325.

19 Astley-Kristensen, p. 11. As for Candrakīrti's dates, Nakamura simply gives "*c.*650." Nakamura, p. 286. Ruegg basically agrees, giving "*c.*600–650," while noting his own disagreement with Lindtner's suggestion of 530–600. David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, A History of Indian Literature, vol. VII, fasc. 1. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981, p. 71.

20 Astley-Kristensen, p. 14.

21 Hodge, p. 61. Minoru Kiyota has identified the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth errors as the Mīmāṃsā views that both the speaker (Skt *vācaka*), and speech (Skt *vāc*) are eternal. Although Kiyota does not clarify this, presumably the speaker referred to is the speaker of the Vedas, i.e. the universe itself. Minoru Kiyota, *Tantric Concept of Bodhicitta: A Buddhist Experiential Philosophy*, Madison: South Asian Area Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1982, p. 65. Kiyota does not explain the basis for this interpretation, unfortunately. Cf. Yamamoto, p. 5, and Wayman and Tajima, p. 259, and p. 279, nn 202 and 203.

22 Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals, and Forms, A Study of the Vajrayoginī Cult in India*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002, pp. 39–40.

23 Ibid., p. 1.

24 Johannes Bronkhorst, *Langage et Réalité: sur un épisode de la pensée indienne*, Bibliotheque de l'École des Hautes Études Sciences Religieuses, vol. 105. Turnhout: Brepols, 1999, p. 9.

25 Ibid., p. 11.

26 Ibid., pp. 12–17.

27 Ibid., p. 17.

28 Ibid.

29 Harold Coward, "The Meaning and Power of *Mantra*s in Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*," in *Understanding Mantras*, Harvey P. Alper, ed., Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 374.

30 Johannes Bronkhorst, "L'absolu dans le Vākyapadiya et son lien avec la Madhyamaka, Études sur Bhartṛhari, 4," in *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, XLVI/1 (1992), pp. 56–80. In its earlier drafts this chapter attempted to link Bhartṛhari's *sphoṭa* theory with a psycho-spiritual practice of identification with the deity similar to that of tantra. It turns out, however, that what Bhartṛhari intended to accomplish with his *sphoṭa* theory is still a subject of contentious debate, and that with the one exception of Coward's speculative interpretation, none of the other scholars consulted makes such a connection, or sees anything other than a rather difficult theory of meaning in Bhartṛhari's various explanations of the concept. See, Johannes Bronkhorst, "Bhartṛhari on sphoṭa and universals, Studies on Bhartṛhari, 3," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, XLV/1 (1991), pp. 5–18; Radhika Herzberger, *Bhartṛhari and the Buddhists: An Essay in the Development of Fifth and Sixth Century Indian Thought*, Studies of Classical India, no. 8, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1986; Saroja Bhate, "Bhartṛhari on Language and Reality," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, XLVII/1 (1993), pp. 67–73; G. B. Palsule, "Points of Agreement and Difference between the Vākyapadiyā and the Mahābhāṣya-Dīpikā in the Matter of Spoṭa," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, XLVII/1 (1993); and Jan E. M. Houben, "Who Are Bhartṛhari's *Padadarśins*? On the Development of Bhartṛhari's Philosophy of Language," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, XLVII/1 (1993), pp. 155–169. See also Bimal Krishna Matilal, "*Sphoṭa* Theory: Early History and Patañjali's View," in Bimal Krishna Matilal, ed. *The Word and the World: India's Contribution to the Study of Language*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990. My thanks to David Carpenter for assisting me with understanding this issue.

31 David Carpenter, "Bhartṛhari and the Veda," in Jeffrey R. Timm, ed., *Texts in Context: Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, p. 19.

32 Coward, p. 173.

33 Wade T. Wheelock, "The *Mantra* in Vedic and Tantric Ritual," in Alper.

34 Yoshita S. Hakeda, tr., *Kūkai: Major Works*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, p. 144.
35 Richard H. Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval India*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 135.
36 Ibid., p. 133.
37 Ibid., p. 126.
38 Yūkei Matsunaga, "Tāntric Buddhism and Shingon Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist*, new series, 2/2 (1969), p. 8.
39 Abé, p. 221. It is for this reason that Kūkai can claim Mahāvairocana as the first patriarch of the Shingon lineage.
40 Mark S. G. Dyczkowski, *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987, p. 21.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 3.
43 Ibid., p. 198.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid., p. 200.
46 For an extensive discussion of tantric esoteric physiology, see David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, especially chs 7 and 8.
47 François Chenet, "De l'Efficience Psychogogique des *Mantras* et des *Yantras*," in *Mantras et Diagrammes Rituels dans l'Hindouisme*, André Padoux, ed., Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986, p. 76.
48 Jens Schlieter, *Versprachlichung–Entsprachlichung: Untersuchungen sum philosophiischen Stellenwert der Sprache im europäischen und buddhistischen Denken*, Cologne: Edition Chōra, 2000, pp. 189–190.
49 Kalama Sutta, Anguttara Nikaya III.65, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. (www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/sutta/anguttara/an03-065.html).
50 Pottapada Sutta, Digha Nikaya 9, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, tr. (www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/sutta/digha/dn09.html).
51 Collett Cox, *Disputed Dharmas: Early Buddhist Theories on Existence*, Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995, p. 160.
52 See, for example, Georges B. J. Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997, p. 210.
53 Regarding Vasubandhu's conceptions of language, see Bronkhorst, *Langage et Réalité*, pp. 83–87, and for Asaṅga, pp. 87–88.
54 Phyllis Granoff, "Buddhaghoṣa's Penance and Siddhasena's Crime: Remarks on Some Buddhist and Jain Attitudes towards the Language of Religious Texts," in Koichi Shinohara and Gregory Schopen, eds, *From Benares to Beijing: Essays on Buddhism and Chinese Religion*, Oakville, NY: Mosaic Press, 1991, p. 19.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 25.
57 Yūkei Matsunaga, "On the Date of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*," in Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques, Vol. XXII, 3 vols, Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 3: 882 and 893.
58 Wallis, "The Buddha's Remains," p. 91.
59 Ibid., pp. 96–97.
60 English, p. 164.
61 Cabezón, p. 175.

62 Ibid.
63 Moving to an exegetical position, one might suggest that the emptiness of language and conceptual thought is just as empty as anything else, and that since emptiness marks the character of awakened consciousness, the emptiness of language and conceptual thought is just as much awakened consciousness.
64 Abé, p. 214.
65 Ibid., p. 218.
66 Asad, p. 29.
67 Because my concern with the issue of the continuity of praxis (both practice and doctrine) has been misunderstood in the past, let me clearly state that this is not a (covert) claim of legitimacy for the Shingon tradition based on some sort of unbroken lineage from India to contemporary Japan. Much of the rhetoric of East Asian Buddhism has emphasized discontinuity for a variety of reasons, including nativist politics of the Meiji era. Such exceptionalism – and indeed triumphalism – has impeded more nuanced historical understandings.

6

BUDDHIST CEREMONIALS (*KŌSHIKI*) AND THE IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE OF ESTABLISHED BUDDHISM IN EARLY MEDIEVAL JAPAN

James L. Ford

Introduction

The formation or maintenance of any ideology is invariably linked to specific modes of production that articulate and disseminate its important dimensions. This process of articulation, as Wuthnow, among many others, has ably demonstrated, includes discursive genres that may be routinized, patronized, and eventually institutionalized. Put another way, material culture, by which I mean the products that constitute and manifest culture, does not merely reflect ideology; it creates it. This chapter examines a liturgical genre of Buddhist literature that, although originating in the medieval era, became popular among a small but prominent group of monks within the established schools.

Kōshiki, which one scholar has translated as "Buddhist ceremonials," served as the liturgical basis for popular rituals designed to foster devotion to a particular buddha, bodhisattva, patriarch, or even sacred text.[1] While several *kōshiki* are still performed today, few new texts were written after the fourteenth century. Of those that can be accurately dated, almost 90 percent were written from the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, and almost two-thirds were written during the Kamakura period alone (1185–1333). Hence, the period during which this peculiar form of liturgy thrived was comparatively short yet fraught with social, political, economic, and religious upheaval.

Why did *kōshiki* appeal to a handful of prominent monks within the established schools of Buddhism during the early medieval period? How

did their emergence relate to contemporary socio-religious, political, and economic changes? What ideological message did it convey, and what function did it serve? While answers to some of these questions must remain speculative due to the lack of historical data, enough circumstantial evidence exists to warrant their investigation. I argue that the conspicuous rise in the number of *kōshiki* written during the early medieval period relates to a confluence of contextual factors and to their apparent effectiveness in propagating a particular ideology of devotion and salvation within the established schools.

The context and religious discourse of early medieval Japan

Among the contextual issues that contributed to, or perhaps enabled, significant ideological changes in the early medieval period, two interrelated socio-economic trends are noteworthy for this analysis. First, material wealth (that is, land) and power shifted from the imperium and aristocratic families such as the Fujiwara, who had dominated the Nara and Heian eras, to the Minamoto and the Kamakura shogunate. This shift had important consequences for Buddhism. The established institutions and temple complexes could no longer rely on state support or aristocratic patronage to the extent that they had, and their land-holdings, a primary source of their future income, remained under continued threat. For example, Kōfukuji and Todaiji's involvement in Go-Shirakawa's failed effort to restore imperial power over the Taira hegemony resulted in the virtual destruction of their institutional complexes in 1180 at the hands of Taira Shigehara. Similarly, Go-Toba's failed effort to reassert imperial control in the Jōkyū Disturbance (1221) resulted in the confiscation of over 3000 estates by the Kamakura shogunate. Any remotely insurgent actions met with similar reprisal.

Two by-products of this shift in socio-political power and wealth include a shift in patronal sources for religious groups and institutions and increasing levels of anxiety at all levels of society. Both developments contributed to a quest for new fundraising strategies and new visions of religious salvation, respectively. *New* is perhaps too strong an adjective to describe what happened in the early medieval period, since what we see in both fundraising and religious propagation evolved from strategies and messages of the Heian period. Nevertheless, degree and emphasis significantly changed.[2]

The increasing number of reclusive monks, many of whom were involved in *kanjin* campaigns to rebuild destroyed or aging temple complexes, led to increased interaction with the general population (not necessarily peasants), which inspired novel teachings and propagational styles. Kuroda Toshio saw the emergence of *hijiri* from the tenth century on as a significant factor in the development of various *nenbutsu* practices among the common people.[3] The propagation efforts of such monks embraced a diversity of practices beyond the *nenbutsu* per se, however. They promoted a wide

variety of divinities, which suggests that they tried to appeal to audiences *where and when they were encountered*, as opposed to offering a universal path to salvation. Nakao notes the growing *kanjin hijiri* proselytizing activities during the early Kamakura period, especially in the wake of temple destructions, and details the temple and pagoda construction projects they initiated.[4]

In addition, the increase in the wandering *hijiri* and "reclusive" monks with no or only marginal connections to the established temple complexes meant that, beyond the controlled discourse of the state or Buddhist establishment, more and more voices competed for listeners. Much of their rhetoric revolved around the most efficacious practices and particular objects of devotion. One result is a new "paradigm of liberation," evident in the discourse of many of the most prominent monks of this new, independent movement.

Jacqueline Stone identifies four characteristics of a new "paradigm of liberation" shared by Tendai *hongaku* thought and the newly emerging Kamakura sects.[5] The first of these is the non-linearity of liberation – that is, that it occurs in a single moment, rather than at the end of a lengthy path taking three *kalpas* or more. Second, because liberation occurs in a single moment it is based on a single condition, rather than a plurality of causes and conditions.[6] That there is a single condition for liberation further implies the third characteristic, which is that the single condition is all-inclusive – it does not represent one stage toward enlightenment, but incorporates the entire path. This leads to the fourth characteristic, the idea that evil *karma* is not an obstruction to enlightenment, and that the production of merit is not necessarily propitious.[7]

Monks more closely aligned with the established schools in Nara took issue with some aspects of this paradigm and were highly critical of the teachings of figures like Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren. Nevertheless, even critics promoted their own devotional allegiances, claiming greater efficacy and soteriological benefits for their particular practices and sacred figures. It is in this context of increasing competition for devotional allegiance, patronage, and doctrinal claims that the genre of *kōshiki* begins to make sense. This was a mode of discourse that was apparently effective in combating the growing popularity of heterodox movements led by the radical founders.

The literary genre of *kōshiki*

Although composed in Chinese, *kōshiki* were recited in vernacular Japanese or a kind of Sino-Japanese hybrid known as *wakan konkōbun*, making them intelligible to all present. Because *kōshiki* involved audience participation and sometimes included a performative dimension as well, they have been characterized as a popular form of *hō-e*, a more elaborate ritual performed

before a largely monastic and aristocratic audience.[8] With the exception of musicologists, the genre has drawn little scholarly attention until very recently.[9] In light of the number of texts and the prominence of their most prolific authors (see below), further study of *kōshiki* promises substantive insights into some propagation and teaching efforts affiliated with the established schools and the worship practices of the laity from the tenth to thirteenth centuries.

Kōshiki incorporate a variety of Buddhist devotional forms and aims, including hymns of praise (Jpn. *kada*; Skt. *gatha*; one of twelve types of scripture in metrical verse), ritual offerings (Jpn. *dengu*), communal obeisance (Jpn. *sōrei*), merit transference (Jpn. *ekō*), and pronouncements of intent (Jpn. *hyōbyaku*) before a sacred object of devotion.[10] The *kō* of *kōshiki* might best be rendered as reading, since it involves a fixed liturgy, in contrast to a more normal, unconstrained sermon (Jpn. *sekkyō*). The text, which generally praises the virtues of a buddha, bodhisattva, patriarch, or text, provides the framework for a performance that takes place before an image of the featured object of devotion (Jpn. *honzon*). In some cases, the focus may even be on an important Buddhist concept, such as Jōkei's *Dōshinki kōshiki* and the *Hosshin kōshiki*, which explains the importance of arousing the aspiration for enlightenment. In any case, part of the *kōshiki* usually clarifies a text or texts closely connected to the object for the average listener.

Structurally, *kōshiki* are commonly divided into three or five sections. The ceremonial master (Jpn. *shikishi*) reads a section, followed by a group of monks reciting a brief chorus. At the conclusion of each chorus, all in attendance often recite a brief phrase, like a *dhāraṇī*, three times. The text itself is ordinarily a mixture of original textual citations and explanations or commentary. The rituals, performed on a monthly or yearly basis, usually took place in the main temple hall, but Myōe was known to perform in the open air, or in the house of followers if the weather were severe.[11] Since the intent was to convey the message in a way that was memorable and understandable, occasionally the monks wore bodhisattva masks or acted out portions of the text.[12] In short, these highly performative rituals were meant to appeal to a broad spectrum of lay followers. Niels Guelberg, certainly the pre-eminent Western scholar on this literary genre, notes that *kōshiki* were considerably less ostentatious and expensive to perform than more prominent ritual forms, such as *hō-e*. He concludes that they were "more modest, personally religious acts."[13]

The ritual endeavors to induce a karmic link (Jpn. *kechien*) between the participants and the object of devotion, but it also served other, perhaps more pragmatic functions – propagational, pedagogical, and even economic. For example, a number of *kōshiki* were linked to *kanjin* campaigns, as part of a broad effort to garner loyal patronage to a particular temple.[14] Indeed, I would argue that the genre's popularity at this time in Japan's history is related to the declining state support of Buddhism and the destruction of

numerous temple complexes by Taira Shigehara in 1180. The pedagogical function of the rituals will become apparent when we look at the content of one of Jōkei's texts.

Genshin's *Nijūgo zanmai shiki* is generally cited as the first example of the *kōshiki* genre.[15] This text was associated with the *Nijūgo zanmai e*, an exclusive assembly of twenty-five Mt. Hiei monks who met monthly and vowed mutual support in their quest of birth in Amida's Pure Land. The text praises the merit of devotion to Amida and aspiration for birth in Western Pure Land. Yoshihige no Yasutane (*c.*931–1002), a prominent courtier, was another significant figure in this assembly and perhaps also in the popular development of the *kōshiki* genre.

Earlier in 964, Yasutane helped to establish a mixed assembly of twenty couriers and twenty monks called the *kangaku-e* dedicated to the study of Buddhism and Chinese poetry. The group met twice a year (on the fifteenth of the third and ninth months) at a temple at the eastern foot of Mt. Hiei to hear lectures on the *Lotus Sūtra*, chant the *nenbutsu*, and compose poetry. The assembly disbanded in 986 when Yasutane took the tonsure and adopted the Buddhist name Jakushin. This is coincident with the first year of the *Nijūgo zanmai* assembly so there is some reason to speculate that Yasutane may have played an important role in the formation of that assembly as well. Despite the somewhat dilettante impression some have had of the *kangaku-e* assembly, Peter Kamens contends that it was historically significant because it represented the "beginnings of very personal involvement by sincere lay Buddhists in Amidist piety and worship outside the confines of formal monastic ritual, and so marks an important development in the early history of the Pure Land movement."[16] Yamada contends that this collaborative meeting between like-minded clerics and lay practitioners seeking to strengthen their spiritual efforts may also have played an influential role in the popularizing of "mixed" *kōshiki* assemblies.[17]

The *Seigan kōshiki* and the *Rokudō kōshiki* are two other early *kōshiki* texts related to the *Nijūgo zanmai shiki*. The *Seigan kōshiki* was authored by Myōken (1026–1098) and, according to the *Seiganji engi*, performed monthly at *Seigan-ji* in Kyoto. The *Nijūgo zanmai shiki w*as also known by this title as well as by the title *Rokudō kōshiki*, so there is considerable confusion as to precisely which text is being referenced in the records of the *Seigan engi*.[18] What is clear according to the *Engi* is that these monthly assemblies at *Seigan-ji* began to attract many lay practitioners and mark what might be called the popularization of this new medium of propagation. Along similar lines, numerous manuscripts of the *Rokudō kōshiki* (an abbreviated version of the *Nijūgo zanmai shiki*) have been found in the archives of various Tendai temples, leading scholars to surmise that this text was also quite popular and likely performed before mixed audiences. Thus, while the *Nijūgo zanmai shiki*, performed for an exclusively monastic assembly, may have been the first of this liturgical genre, *kōshiki* quickly evolved into a medium

of propagation to lay audiences and were an important ingredient in the popularity of Tendai Pure Land teachings.[19]

Ironically, despite the important role of these *kōshiki* in the cultivation of Pure Land devotion from the mid-Heian forward, the overwhelming majority of identifiable extant texts that appeared after this early period of development were written by established monks promoting devotion to buddhas, bodhisattvas, and patriarchs *other than* Amida.[20] Jōkei, the most prolific author with at least thirty attributed texts, represents the "peak" of the genre.[21]

Jien, Jōkei, Myōe and Gyōnen were some of the leading figures of "established Buddhism" that opposed the teachings of the "new" Buddhist founders like Hōnen and Shinran. It would appear that by the late Heian period, the *kōshiki* genre was an important tool for competing with the growing popularity of Amida devotion. Although the appearance of new texts declined rather dramatically after these figures, the rituals based on these texts continued to be performed after this time and a number of texts, among them Genshin's, are still performed today.[22]

Given his prominence as an author and performer of this genre, this study focuses on Jōkei. However, most of what follows would also hold true for Myōe, the other most prominent representative of the established schools and a spiritual brother of Jōkei in so many respects.

Jōkei and the *Kōshiki* genre

Jōkei (1155–1213), also known as Gedatsu Shōnin, was born into the Fujiwara clan, whose power had begun to fade in the latter half of the Heian era.[23] At the early age of seven, he was sent to Kōfuku-ji in Nara, because his father, Sadanori, had been exiled for his involvement in the Heiji disturbance. Four years later, Jōkei took the tonsure and trained under his uncle Kakuken (1131–1212), who would later become superintendent of Kōfuku-ji, and Zōshun (1104–1180), a prominent Hossō scholar-monk. By 1182, at the age of twenty-seven, he was a candidate at the *Yuima-e* at Kōfuku-ji and within four years (1186) held the prestigious position of lecturer (Jpn. *kōshi*) for the same assembly.[24] Over the next five years, he made at least six appearances at the major assemblies in Nara.

In 1192, Jōkei resolved to move to Kasagi-dera, a somewhat remote mountain temple about twelve kilometers northeast of Nara and Kōfuku-ji. Despite appeals from Regent Kujō Kanezane (and even the Kasuga deity, if we are to believe the *Kasuga Gongen genki-e*), Jōkei moved in the fall of the following year.[25] Though this disengagement from worldly affairs did not prove to be complete, it marks a clear move toward a life of reclusion (Jpn. *tonsei*). It was also a decided rejection of what had every indication of becoming a very successful career in the Kōfuku-ji hierarchy. The reasons for this unexpected move are not altogether clear, but some evidence suggests

that Jōkei was annoyed with the highly politicized environment in Nara and sought a more sedate and spiritual lifestyle.

Though small and somewhat remote, Kasagi-dera was well known as a propitious site for Miroku (Skt. Maitreya) devotion because of a massive image of Miroku carved into the cliff overlooking the eighth-century temple.[26] During his fifteen years at Kasagi-dera, Jōkei led or participated in various *kanjin* campaigns and temple reconstructions and appeared fairly often in the capital to give lectures or to oversee ceremonies. He also promoted a wide variety of Buddhist devotions and practices among lay believers. During these years at Kasagi, in 1205, Jōkei wrote the *Kōfuku-ji sōjō*, his now-famous petition to the Court on behalf of the eight established schools for a censure of Hōnen's *senju nenbutsu* teaching. Three years later, in 1208, after expanding Kasagi-dera considerably, Jōkei moved to Kaijūsen-ji, another remote temple, which was dedicated to Kannon Bodhisattva (Skt. Avalokiteśvara). Over the remaining five years of his life, he was active in a campaign to revive the practice and study of the precepts and wrote a number of important treatises on Hossō doctrine.

One of the most revered monks of his time, Jōkei played a key role in several important aspects of early Kamakura Buddhism. He is perhaps best known for authoring the *Kōfuku-ji sōjō* and expressing strong opposition to Hōnen's movement. He was also an important figure in a precept revival effort that blossomed fully in the Shingon-Ritsu movement of Eison and Ninshō. He is further acknowledged for his part in the revival and reform of Hossō doctrine during the early medieval period. In this capacity, he authored a number of tracts that systematized Hossō teachings and introduced several important reforms aimed at reconciling longstanding divisions between Hossō and the other Mahāyāna schools, particularly Tendai. Finally, Jōkei is remembered as an ardent promoter of an eclectic collection of divinities, including Kannon, the Kasuga deity, Jizō (Skt. Kṣitigarbha), Yakushi (Skt. Bhaiṣajyaguru), Shōtoku Taishi, and – above all – Śākyamuni and Miroku.

Jōkei penned at least thirty *kōshiki*. Organized numerically from most to least, we find that Jōkei wrote four *kōshiki* for Śākyamuni or his relics, four for Miroku, three for Kannon, three for the Kasuga deity, two for Jizō, two for Benzaiten (Skt. Sarasvatī), one for Yakushi, and one for Shōtoku taishi. In each of these texts, Jōkei praises the unique merit and qualities of the central figure and the particular benefits that one may expect from paying proper devotion. A brief look at the general structure and content of one of these texts should provide a sense of their general aim.

Jōkei's Miroku devotion

As noted above, Jōkei was well known for his lifelong devotion to Miroku (Skt. Maitreya), which is not all that surprising, since Miroku was widely considered the founder of Jōkei's own Hossō school in India. Tradition

maintained that Miroku was the teacher of Asaṅga, who, along with Vasubandhu, is one of the principal patriarchs of Yogācāra.[27] Beyond this sectarian connection, Jōkei's reclusive move to Kasagi-dera in 1193 is generally cited as the most significant evidence of his devotion to Miroku. Kasagi-dera, long a center of Miroku devotion because of a large stone carving of him, was also proclaimed as a manifestation of Tosotsu Heaven in this world. Miroku, like Śākyamuni before him, currently resides in Tosotsu (Skt Tuṣita) Heaven, the fourth of the six heavens in the Desire Realm (Skt. *kāmadhātu*, Jpn. *yokkai*), from whence he shall descend in 5,670,000,000 years as the next buddha to restore dharma to the world. Many scholars conclude that it was Jōkei's devotion to Miroku and his aspiration for birth in Tosotsu that inspired his move to Kasagi-dera in the first place.[28] Upon arriving at Kasagi, Jōkei quite naturally promoted the temple's affiliation with Miroku in his efforts to procure patronage. For example, an 1196 solicitation letter appealed for support for a thousand-day relic (Jpn. *shari*) lecture at Kasagi-dera with the promise of inducing karmic connections (Jpn. *kechien*) to both Śākyamuni and Miroku:

> We appeal for support to conduct a ceremony honoring the *shari* of the supreme teacher Śākyamuni before the image of his successor Jison [i.e. Miroku]. If you contribute but a little, you will surely attain the superior cause to see the Buddha, hear the Dharma, and arouse the aspiration for enlightenment [Skt. *bodhicitta*, Jpn. *hosshin*].[29]

In another *kanjin* appeal written in 1204, Jōkei proclaimed that, because Kasagi-dera is so identified with Tosotsu, "All who set one foot on this ground will, ever still, [see] the moon of [Miroku's] inner realm. And among the monks residing on this mountain, who shall be kept from the spring of [Miroku's] descent?"[30] Numerous extant texts reflect Jōkei's devotion to Miroku, including four *kōshiki* texts and the *Shin'yō shō*, all of which probably date to his time at Kasagi-dera. More specifically, three texts are entitled *Miroku kōshiki*, and a fourth, entitled *Tosotsu raku'yō*, is formatted as a *kōshiki* text.[31] The *Shin'yō shō* (Essentials of the mind [intent upon seeking enlightenment]), one of Jōkei's most studied texts, expounds the meaning of Hossō doctrine in terms of eight gates or teachings and emphatically promotes devotion to Miroku. It is generally thought to have been written around 1196.[32]

Closer examination of one of Jōkei's *kōshiki* texts, the five-part *Miroku kōshiki*, written in 1196, will convey the structure of this genre and illustrate the content of his propagational message with respect to Miroku. The colophon indicates that it was written at Kasagi-dera on the tenth day of the second month at the honorable request of Senshin Shōnin of Bodaisan, a disciple of Shinen (1153–1224), a Hossō monk of Fujiwara stock and

brother of Kanezane and Tendai cleric Jien.[33] This *kōshiki* may have been written to be performed before the Miroku image at Kōfukiji's Hokuendō, and even perhaps to raise funds to rebuild Bodaisan-ji, since Senshin Shōnin had relations with both temples.[34]

The text begins with a description of various ritual offerings (flowers, chants, and petitions to the Buddha) and proper homage to the triple body of the Tathāgata, the holy teachings, the learned *saṅgha*, and, of course, the Bodhisattva Miroku. Jōkei then laments the conditions of the present world and the tragic plight of its occupants. Given our deluded, sorrowful, and almost hopeless state, "is there anything," he asks, "that surpasses prompt and earnest submission to the teachings of the World-Honored Śākyamuni and profoundly entrusting ourselves to the compassionate guidance of Miroku Bodhisattva?" He goes on to praise this devotional exercise toward Miroku:

> The merit of one offering or one verse of praise is not simply a matter of awaiting the morning breeze of [Miroku's] Dragon Flower assembly. Given [Miroku's] vow of unbounded mercy and compassion, how can we not desire [to see] the autumn clouds of Tosotsu? Thus, we engage in a noble deed whenever we direct our intention [toward Miroku]. Today's homage to Miroku's virtues truly constitutes one such deed.[35]

In addition to praising the merit of participating in such a liturgical ceremony, Jōkei is subtly telling his audience that the benefits lie not only in the hope of being present for the far-off Dragon Flower assembly but also in the more immediate benefit of birth in Miroku's heavenly realm.

Jōkei then outlines the structure and content of the liturgical lecture:

> This lecture does not resemble that of ordinary times. I hope to express my mind by means of the [the metaphor of passing through] five gates [Jpn. *mon*]. First is repentance [Jpn. *zange*] and the eradication of sins; second is devotion to Miroku; third is aspiring for the inner realm of Tosotsu Heaven; fourth is truly achieving superior birth; and fifth is the fulfillment of cause and completion of effect [that is, buddhahood].[36]

Here, we see the logical structure of Jōkei's presentation. Although visualization is not specifically mentioned, the sequence – even the use of gates through which participants sequentially pass – mirrors existing Pure Land treatises that emphasize visualization.[37] While this *kōshiki* clearly did not serve as a guide for contemplative practice, it may be appropriately interpreted as a ritual guide toward the same end – birth in Miroku's heavenly realm and, ultimately, full enlightenment.

This path is repeated in other similar ritual texts. First, we must repent our sins (Jpn. *zange*) and fully acknowledge the futility of our deluded way of perceiving and being in the world. Then, we must begin to recognize the virtues of Miroku, thereby grasping the merit of venerating this sacred figure. Once we have appreciation for the virtue of Miroku's vows and long-pursued bodhisattva path, then we can begin to see the benefits of aspiring for birth in his heavenly realm and the means of achieving that goal. Upon realizing birth in Tosotsu heaven, we can work to achieve full enlightenment as a result of being in the presence of that illustrious dharma teacher.

The first gate emphasizes the impermanence of all things, especially the body, which is "like a smoldering house barely supported by the pillar of life."[38] "The soul will have passed away when the body grows cold," Jōkei warns, "and so the body will be discarded into a wasteland. The rains will drench it; the sun will beat down upon it; and in the twinkling of an eye, it will have decomposed. When burned, it will be reduced to ashes."[39] In typical Buddhist fashion, Jōkei vividly reminds his audience of the ephemeral nature of life and the world to which we so foolishly cling.

He proceeds to expound a bit on the Hossō concept of consciousness-only. "Nonetheless," he writes, "the Three Worlds are only the one mind, and there are no dharmas separate from this mind. The pervading delusion is that there appears to be 'existence' where there is none. From its origin, the world (Jpn. *kyōkai*) is neither good nor evil. It is only within our minds that such distinctions arise."[40] As a result, *kalpas* of negative *karma* can be obliterated just by realizing their "unproduced" nature. This realization is difficult, however, so Jōkei concludes this section by leading his audience in a *gatha* chant:

> We beseech the various Buddhas to grant their holy protection and skillfully extinguish all deluded views of the mind. And we pray that we may quickly realize the origin of the mind's true nature and swiftly witness the unexcelled teaching of the Tathāgata. Since *karma* have no fixed nature, they are unproduced and also not subject to annihilation.
>
> We pay homage to the future guide, Miroku Nyorai, and repent with shame raising the hindrances to enlightenment by the sins we have committed through the six senses. (Repeat three times.)[41]

This final stanza, repeated three times by all in attendance, functions much like a *dhāraṇī* or *mantra*-like phrase.[42] So while realizing the "unproduced nature" of sinful *karma* is difficult, we may fruitfully rely on the Tathāgata's power to achieve it. In other words, people are praying *not* for the destruction of *kalpas* of accumulated negative *karma* but for the destruction of mental

obstacles that are the consequences of our sinful actions. While this distinction is subtle, it clearly resonates with the Hossō doctrine of consciousness-only.

The second gate extols the status and virtues of Miroku, whose power to emancipate, according to Jōkei, exceeds that of all other Buddhas, even Śākyamuni, because Miroku will be the next buddha of our *Sahā* World, the impure world we presently inhabit. At present, he is "cultivating insight into *yuishiki* (consciousness-only), thereby realizing the essence of the mind."[43] Here, Jōkei emphasizes Miroku's unique link to the Hossō school and encourages the members of his audience to apply themselves to its teachings. Jōkei then reminds them that because each person has different aspirations and, we might say, spiritual capacities, we should be comforted by Miroku's resolute vow: "I [Miroku] have obtained the transmission of the teaching promised by the Great Teacher Śākyamuni. I shall not abandon even those who do not call upon me. How much more [shall I be with] those that do!"[44] This vow is unshakable and must be called to mind and believed in faithfully. The section concludes with the following *gatha*:

> Thus, we intone this *gatha*, chanting: In accordance with the Buddha with the Brilliance of the Sun, Moon, and Lamp [Skt. Candrasūra-pradīpa-buddha], Miroku realized the *samādhi* of representation-only by means of which he expounded on the seventeen stages of practice in the *Yogācāra-bhūmi* [Jpn. *Yugashiji-ron*] that is now part of the True Dharma of Śākyamuni. He will later become the Buddha named Miroku, broadly leading sentient beings to the other shore.
>
> We pay homage to the future guide, Miroku Nyorai; may we encounter him in lifetime after lifetime, and age after age. (Repeat three times.)[45]

The third gate praises the merit of aspiring for the Inner Palace of Tosotsu Heaven, where Miroku now resides before descending as the next buddha. Because of his spiritual accomplishments, he has been able to purify that abode "so it is rightly called a Pure Land within the three realms and six destinies."[46] Jōkei proceeds to describe Tosotsu Heaven and its tiered gardens with countless jeweled trees and flowers; the forty-nine-storied inner palace, where Miroku sits upon the great Lion Throne; and the various features, both major and minor, of Miroku himself. Miroku, he reports, ceaselessly preaches the dharma to all classes of gods, who comprehend and practice effortlessly due to the power of Miroku's vow. Jōkei also praises the patriarchs of the Hossō tradition (Asaṇga, Vasubandhu, Hsüan-tsang, and so on), who inherited Miroku's dharma teaching. This section concludes with the following *gatha*:

> Miroku was born into Tosotsu Heaven and [enthroned] in the forty-nine-storied Mani palace where he ceaselessly expounds the

> practice of non-retrogression and liberates sentient beings through skillful means. Those who share a [karmic] connection [Jpn. *yūen*] are, one and all alike, reborn into the wonderful lotus pond whose waters manifest the eight virtues.[47] We now, with all disciples, dedicate ourselves to Miroku that we may achieve realization at the Dragon Flower Assembly.[48]
>
> We pay homage to the perfectly enlightened Miroku Tathāgata who vowed to bestow his merciful countenance upon all living beings. (Repeat three times.)[49]

Once again, we can see Jōkei's effort to highlight the link between Miroku and the Hossō doctrinal and patriarchal tradition.

The fourth gate is to "correctly achieve a superior birth, which, as previously stated, is the inner realm [of Miroku's palace] based on the established tradition of the three countries [India, China, and Japan]."[50] As with those aspiring for birth in Amida's Western Paradise, the final moment of death is crucial. Jōkei encourages his audience to pray for a death without suffering under the protection of the celestial deities. The idea is to avoid all potential distractions at the moment of death, including the diversionary tactics of Māra. "Fearlessly," Jōkei writes, "you should wait upon death as a host does a good friend and single-mindedly contemplate on the Buddha." At some point, you will see a wisp of incense arising from the open window and hear the faint music of a reed instrument. Miroku Bosatsu will appear, emitting light from the curl between his brows, with countless heavenly deities showering red *mahā-mandārava* flowers. Miroku, towering and serene, will draw along your side, accompanied by Śākyamuni and all the buddhas of the ten directions, expounding the wondrous Mahāyāna teachings. Grateful tears will gather, as you see and hear these things with your own eyes and ears. The Buddha and the sacred multitude will then ascend together, and you will, all at once, find yourself welcomed into Miroku's heavenly realm. They will exclaim in unison, "How wonderful! How wonderful! Son of a good family! Throughout [your incarnations in] *Jambu-dvīpa*,[51] your extensive meritorious actions, practices, and vows have not been in vain. Thus, you have been born in this place called Tosotsu Heaven. The lord of this heaven is Miroku. You should entrust yourself [to him] forthwith."[52]

Upon hearing these words, Jōkei tells his audience to pay proper obeisance to Miroku. Contemplating the light shining forth from Miroku's brow, they will overcome the sins committed over some nine billion *kalpas*. At this time, Miroku will reveal the dharma of the middle way through the principle of consciousness-only. Jōkei then praises the fortune of "our country" in receiving this illustrious transmission. Finally, the following *gatha* is chanted.

> Again, those sentient beings who arouse the mind of faith, practice the ten good acts for a short time, pay obeisance [to Buddha images] and recite [sūtras], or even contemplate making an offering of one flower to a celestial deity, will thereby achieve birth in [Miroku's] Palace [Jpn. *nyoi den*].[53]
>
> We pay homage to the assembly wherein Miroku Nyorai abides and pray that, at life's end, we will certainly be born among them. (Repeat three times.)[54]

Because Jōkei seems to emphasize the minimal effort required to activate Miroku's saving power, he may reasonably be assumed to have had a mixed lay and monastic audience in mind as he wrote this sermon.

The final gate envisions an individual before Miroku, recalling the causes and conditions that led to Miroku's vow being successfully fulfilled, including his birth, renunciation, journey through six destinies, and gradual progress along the bodhisattva path. In doing so, the individual envisions his own path to enlightenment alongside Miroku. The section concludes:

> During the constellation of the present age [Jpn. *gengō*],[55] you shall serve under all the buddhas [beginning from] the stage of accumulation, advance step by step [along the bodhisattva path].[56] At length, you shall ascend to the jeweled lotus throne and receive the name of one who has become perfectly enlightened. If you have the buddha-nature, then nothing here will be difficult [to attain]. Truly, one ought to know that all of this results from the magnificent merciful benevolence of Śākyamuni and Miroku.[57]

It ends with a final *gatha*.

> For long *kalpas* we have cultivated our vows and practices, and we can now hear the great and merciful name of Miroku; we will directly receive the path tomorrow morning, though even now we are fainthearted and in despair. For three great incalculable *kalpas* [Miroku] practiced hundreds of thousands of austerities. His virtues are perfected and pervade the dharma realm – as he has thoroughly accomplished [Jpn. *kukyō*] the ten stages [to perfect enlightenment] and witnessed all three bodies [of the buddha]. [We] pray that these virtues universally extend everywhere so that we and all sentient beings may together realize the buddha way.
>
> We pay homage to Miroku Nyorai who is worthy of offerings and possesses perfect enlightenment, and who renders benefits equally to self and others throughout the dharma realm. (Repeat three times.)[58]

Even as Jōkei reminds his audience of the importance of karmic effort, he stresses the saving power of Miroku himself. By virtue of Miroku's accumulated wealth of merit, we should faithfully entrust ourselves to him.

A strong sectarian agenda appears to inform part of Jōkei's overall message. While Miroku's saving grace, alluring realm, and role as a symbol of hope for the future were undeniably important elements in Jōkei's piety, Miroku's premier status within the Yogācāra/Hossō school was critical. As Jōkei reminds his audience in this *kōshiki*, Miroku was the fountainhead of the Hossō tradition by means of his revealed teachings to Asanga. Moreover, devotion to Miroku, particularly within the Hossō sect, was a means of carrying that transmission forward. Jōkei's veneration for Miroku and his efforts to revive the status of the Hossō school and its doctrine were deeply interrelated missions, reflected in all of his writings about Miroku. Not to discount the high regard he had for Tosotsu as a superior goal for rebirth or the important temporal link between Śākyamuni and Miroku, but seeing the symbiotic relationship between his efforts to advance the status of his own sect and his promotion of Miroku as an object of devotion is vital.

Hiraoka Jōkai, who authored several studies on Miroku worship in Japan, identifies Jōkei as perhaps the critical figure in the revival of Miroku veneration in medieval Japan, particularly in his emphasis on aspiration to birth in Miroku's realm. Hiraoka traces Jōkei's influence through Sōshō Shōnin (1202–1278), who followed Jōkei at Kasagidera and compiled an influential collection of Miroku devotional texts, many authored by Jōkei, entitled *Miroku Nyōrai kanōshō* (Collection of faithful responses to Miroku Nyōrai/Maitreya Tathāgata).[59]

Jōkei's paradigm of liberation

An examination of Jōkei's broader corpus of *kōshiki* reveals further dimensions of both the contextual discourse he appropriates and the ideological agenda he promotes. Jōkei was writing at a time of intense competition for popular devotion at both the sectarian and temple levels. The wide popularity of Amida and the growing aspiration for his Pure Land, even before Hōnen's appearance, serve as backdrop to Jōkei's propagational efforts. The increasing independence of reclusive monks and wandering *hijiri*, a trend of which he was a part, facilitated creative efforts to promote devotion for specific deities at competing sacred sites. At least five themes reappear throughout Jōkei's *kōshiki* discourse.

First, no matter the focus of the ritual, he always highlights the central place of Śākyamuni within Buddhism. Jōkei's steadfast devotion to Śākyamuni is said to have influenced other monks, such as Eison, and inaugurated a revival of Śākyamuni veneration that lasted through the Kamakura period.[60] Virtually every one of his *kōshiki* texts begins with the standard

salutation of gratitude for Śākyamuni's gift of the Dharma. For example, the *Kannon kōshiki* (1201B) begins:

> Reverently we address the Lord Śākyamuni Tathāgata, to whom we are so greatly indebted, the three treasures of all realms of the ten directions and three existences, and particularly the most compassionate Kanjizaison [that is, Kannon, Skt. Avalokiteśvara] and the innumerable holy retinue of Mt. Fudaraku, and we say . . .[61]

Hiraoka Jōkai, Yasui Shūkō, Narita Jōkan, Hayami Tasuku, and Inahori Taitsu all conclude that Śākyamuni was indeed the fountainhead of Jōkei's Buddhist faith and revival efforts as well as his specific devotion to Miroku and Kannon.[62] As virtually all of these scholars point out, Jōkei's frequent praise for the power of the Buddha's relics (Jpn. *busshari*), his precept revival efforts, and his devotion to Kasuga (a manifestation of Śākyamuni, according to the *honji suijaku* theory) are fundamentally linked to his loyalty to the historical buddha. Ultimately, all three of these are manifestations of the Buddha's power in the present. Specific *kōshiki* and *gammon* texts that exemplify his veneration and promotion of Śākyamuni include three *Shari kōshiki* (1192, 1203, and an undated version), *Seigan shari kōshiki* (1196), *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon* (*c.*1209–1213), *Kasuga daimyōjin hotsugammon* (*c.*1192), *Kingu ryōzen kōshiki*[63] (1196), and *Tōshōdaiji Shaka nenbutsu gammon* (1203).

In other contexts, Jōkei laments the apparent neglect of Śākyamuni and the growing ignorance of his premier place within the tradition. Perhaps his most emphatic declaration may be found in the *Kōfukuji sōjō*, where he lambasts exclusive (Jpn. *senju*) *nenbutsu* followers of Hōnen for turning their backs on the historical buddha:

> What sensible person does not know that although the various Buddhas of the Three Worlds are impartial in their compassion, the favors and blessings bestowed upon us by the teacher of our epoch [i.e. Śākyamuni] are uniquely beneficial? Now the Single-practice people say: "With our bodies we do not worship other Buddhas and with our voices we do not call upon other names." This statement about "other Buddhas and other Names" refers to Śākyamuni and the other Buddhas. You Single-practitioners, whose disciples are you? Who taught you this Name Amida? Who showed you this Pure Land of Peace and Rest [Jpn. *an'yō jōdo*]? You are to be pitied that during your life in these Latter Days you should forget the name of our Original Teacher. . . . The community of monks takes refuge in the Buddha – in all of the Buddhas. And if we do not discriminate against the various Buddhas, how much more so should we not slight our Original Teacher [i.e. Śākyamuni]![64]

For Jōkei, Śākyamuni, whose power is not limited to the past, is the origin of Buddhism and should be revered as such. His veneration is further evidenced by two *Shaka-nenbutsu* assemblies he initiated – the first at the Eastern Hall of Tōshōdai-ji in 1202 and the second at Hōryū-ji's Jōkanōin in 1204.[65]

Second, Jōkei often promoted aspiration for birth in realms other than Amida's, most particularly Miroku's Tosotsu heaven and Kannon's Mt. Fudaraku. He overtly claims that these realms are considerably easier to attain than birth in Amida's Pure Land, reflecting again the context of Amida's overwhelming popularity. In his advocacy of Miroku and Kannon's realms, Jōkei often compares them directly to Amida's Pure Land. At one point in the five-part *Miroku kōshiki* summarized above, he actually contends that one who realizes birth in Tosotsu Heaven is virtually assured birth in Amida's realm in the next life. He writes:

> All classes of gods [residing in Tosotsu Heaven], in accordance with their vows, accomplish the eight precepts [Jpn. *saikai*] in one thought, cultivate the highest causes of enlightenment [Jpn. *jōbon no shuin*], and by means of but one invocation, achieve the assurance of rebirth [Jpn. *ōjō*] [in Amida's Pure Land] in their next life. [Although] these practices are truly easy, their merit is extraordinarily great. Without the power of Miroku's vow, this would not be possible. Who among even the great sages and the most ignorant would not hope for this?[66]

Thus, birth in Miroku's realm is an important and, for many, necessary stepping stone for realizing birth in Amida's realm. In the passage that follows, Jōkei further asserts that many of those currently residing in Amida's Pure Land previously passed through Tosotsu. He goes on to remind his audience that an important tradition of thinkers within the Hossō school, including Asaṇga, Vasubandhu, Śīlabhadra (529–645), Xuanzang (600–664), and Kuiji (632–682), attests to the primacy of Miroku's realm. In a rather admonishing tone, he asks his listeners rhetorically, "And of what lineage are we also? Or do we rather forget the precedent established [by these patriarchs]?"[67] No doubt many in his audience, as in any assembly of monks of the established schools from the mid-Heian period forward, practiced *nenbutsu* recitation and aspired for birth in Amida's realm. Jōkei was evidently trying to bring this Hossō flock back into the fold, but he was not above borrowing from the popular capital of Amida devotion to accomplish the task.

In the 1201B version of the *Kannon kōshiki*, Jōkei argues that birth on Kannon's Mt. Fudaraku is easier than reaching Gokuraku for ignorant beings. In the third and final section of this text, entitled "Praying to be led and received [to Mt. Fudaraku] in the future" (Jpn. *ki-raisei-insetsu*), he writes:

> The *Nyoirin*[68] states: "From today until you become a Buddha, you will not fall into the evil paths. Always you will be born in the presence of a Buddha, and as for the essentials of your future births, this passage will fulfill them." It also says: "If you chant this *dhāraṇī* one hundred eight times each day, you will see Kannon, Jizai Bosatsu, who will say, 'Whatever vow you seek and desire, all will be bestowed upon you.' Amida Buddha himself will manifest his body. And you will also see the splendor of Gokuraku, the Buddhas of the ten directions, and Mt. Fudaraku of Kannon." . . . As for birth in the West, this corresponds particularly to [Amida's] original vow. Amida was Kannon's original teacher, and Kannon is Amida's assistant [Jpn. *fusho*] in the Land of Bliss. He will surely, with the holy retinue, come to welcome [Jpn. *raigō*] [the dying person]. He himself carries the Lotus pedestal and he leads us [to the Pure Land]. That which he vowed is simply this. *If there is someone whose practice and karma are not yet mature and has hindrances to birth in the Pure Land, he can first reside on Mt. Fudaraku.* That mountain is in the great sea southwest from here. The flowering forests and fruit trees all mix their wondrous colors, and the ponds, the waters, the springs, and the rivers are all not like those of the human world. . . . Kannon sits atop a diamond jeweled-leaf stone, while countless Bodhisattvas also sit upon treasure stones. . . . *Even though it is different in size, it* [i.e. Fudaraku] *is like facing the Pure Land. Thus, it is part of the Sahā World, but it is not like the Sahā World. Among the wise men and sages, who would not aspire to it? It is a Pure Land but not a Pure Land. Birth there is truly easy for the unenlightened* [Jpn. *bonpu*]. Kannon himself urged practitioners saying: "You will surely be born in my pure Buddha-realm and together with me practice the Bodhisattva way. As for my Pure Land, in the distance there is the Land of Bliss in the west and here at hand is Mt. Fudaraku."[69]

Jōkei asserts here that birth in Kannon's realm is easier, because it is part of the *Sahā* World and the closest of all sacred realms.[70] For this reason, it is even easier, he notes, than achieving birth in the realms of Śākyamuni or Miroku – even ignorant beings (Jpn. *bonpu*) still burdened with karmic defilements can achieve birth there. Moreover, by means of Kannon's unique relationship to Amida, if one achieves birth on Mt. Fudaraku, then it will be easy to realize birth in Amida's Pure Land in the next life. This example is one of many in which Jōkei appropriates the popularity of Amida devotion, while arguing against aspiration for Gokuraku because of the difficulty of attaining birth there.

A third theme within Jōkei's broader devotional discourse, more implicit than explicit in his *kōshiki* literature, is a recognition of the soteriological

necessity of some other power in the quest for spiritual progress. He recognized that people could no longer achieve enlightenment on their own and frequently argued for the necessity of "other-power" or "divine blessing" (Jpn. *myōga*). In the *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon* (Vow to the Buddha's relics and the great sage Kannon; *c.*1208–1213), he writes:

> If by means of self-power [Jpn. *jiriki*], one attempts to eradicate these sins, it is like a moth trying to drink up the great ocean. Simply relying on the Buddha's power, you should single-mindedly repent your errors. We humbly pray that the relics that he left behind and that are the object of worship of his disciples, the holy retinue of the Southern Sea, and Kanjizaison will shine the beams of the sun of wisdom and extinguish the darkness of the sins of the six roots and, by means of the power of this great compassion and wisdom, eradicate the offenses of the three categories of action.[71]

Further on, he emphasizes the need to rely on an "other-power," in this case, the Buddha's relics:

> Even manifesting the great fruit of progress in the present [Jpn. *genzai*] is from relying on the majestic power of the relics. Moreover, it is not difficult. How much easier it will be in one's next life [Jpn. *jinji*] to realize birth [Jpn. *ōjō*] in the Southern Sea and see the great sages by means of the skillful means [Jpn. *hōben*] of the Tathāgata's relics.[72]

In other words, Jōkei asserts that, by means of Buddha's relics, one can attain enlightenment – how easy it must be to achieve birth on Kannon's Mt. Fudaraku. Likewise, in the *Shin'yō shō* (Essentials of the Mind [Intent Upon Seeking Enlightenment], *c.*1206), he states:

> All the more so, the karmic causes for birth in the Pure Land, in accordance with one's capacity, are not the same. Finding the nectar largely depends on divine blessing [Jpn. *myōga*]. Thus, in the last age, as for Buddhas, there are Miroku and Amida; as for sūtras, there are the *Hokke* [i.e. *Lotus*] and *Hannya* [i.e. *Heart*]; as for religious practice, there are the *nenbutsu* and sūtra recitation; and as for birth, there are the Pure Land and Tosotsu. They correspond [to the capacities] of eight or nine out of ten, but about the remainder, I am not sure.[73]

Finally, in the last year of his life, he writes in the *Kanjin sōjo enmyō no koto* (Contemplation on the Pure and Perfect Enlightenment): "Those who desire to enter the broad gate of the mind, their nature is not equal to it. And those

who desire to cultivate these subtle practices, it is difficult to rely on one's own mind."[74]

Thus, despite representing one of the most conservative of the established schools, Jōkei argued emphatically for the need to rely on some external power. He also advocated some degree of self-effort, but, even here, his understanding of "self-effort" is nuanced. For Jōkei, the power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas works concomitantly with the practices they cultivated and left behind. In this sense, he writes in the *Kan'yu dōhōki* (Encouraging mutual understanding of the Dharma):

> Even though the merit of self-practice is not vast or great, the powers of the Buddhas and the Dharma will surely be added to them. The Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past and present all cultivated this path and [thereby] realized enlightenment. And the same shall be true of bodhisattvas in the future.[75]

In other words, the true benefit of the various contemplative methods lay not in the effort they require but in the intervening power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas that they embody.[76] Jōkei did not simply advocate easy practices but also asserted that even practices like consciousness-only contemplation (Jpn. *yuishiki sanmai*), conventionally understood as "difficult," are "easy" because of the other-power they embrace. This contention is comparable to the tradition in early Pure Land circles that the *nien-fo* [*nenbutsu*] practice, contemplative and oral, embodies "power" by virtue of Amida's vow, not just by the effort they require.

Fourth, and somewhat paradoxically, Jōkei emphasized the relevance of one's thoughts, deeds, and actions (Skt. *karma*) in one's progress along the bodhisattva path and, more immediately, successful birth in a sacred realm. In other words, the need to rely on the other-power of sacred divinities and the means they left behind does not obviate the importance of our own efforts. He frequently qualifies the promise of benefits resulting from devotion to one or another divinity with phrases like "we partake of the good ambrosial medicine [of the Buddha's varying teachings] each according to our karmic predispositions"[77] or "depending on one's capacity (*ki*) and in accordance with one's circumstances."[78]

In his *kōshiki* literature, Jōkei often insists on the need for active and sincere repentance (Jpn. *zange*) of sins. In all three versions of the *Miroku kōshiki*, *zange* is the first task of the devotee. "Concerning the repentance and eradication of sins," he counsels his audience, "the power of deluded actions can greatly hinder the two benefits. If you seek enlightenment (Jpn. *gedatsu*), then it is essential to practice *zange*."[79] In both the three-part and seven-part versions of the *Kannon kōshiki*, Jōkei specifically states that without *zange* and the consequent destruction of sins, one cannot contemplate Kannon, which also means one cannot achieve *ōjō*.[80] A similar emphasis is

placed on *zange* in numerous other *kōshiki*, including the *Yakushi kōshiki*, the *Kannon kōshiki* (five-part), and both the one and five-part *Jizō kōshiki*. In praise of the power of the *dhāraṇī* to Kannon in the *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon*, he exclaims, "Ah, to be able to remove the sins of the four roots is the wondrous function of this sacred *dhāraṇī*!"[81]

Here, again, we see that, although Jōkei advocated reliance on "other-power," ultimately the law of karmic causality is irrefutable. Moral behavior matters, and sins are serious obstructions to spiritual progress. While the buddhas and bodhisattvas embody infinite compassion, self-power and other-power maintain a necessary and mutual relationship. The act of repentance is a form of self-power and an essential element in one's commitment to the path to enlightenment. In this sense, Jōkei articulates a middle way between the rhetorical extremes of other-power and self-power.

Finally, implicit in Jōkei's emphasis on the need for other powers and the differentiated karmic status of each person is an argument for pluralism with respect to Buddhism's sacred deities and methods of practice and devotion. Because we are each at different places along the bodhisattva path, different powers and spiritual practices are available to us, according to our capacity and needs. In the face of increasingly exclusive and universalistic claims, evident in figures like Hōnen and the broader Tendai discourse of the latter Heian era, as revealed by Stone's new "paradigm of liberation," Jōkei articulates a competing ideology of what may be fairly labeled Buddhist pluralism.[82] He and Myōe both seem particularly concerned with the implications of the exclusive and universal soteriological claims coming out of the Tendai sphere that implicitly undermined the importance of Śākyamuni and other sacred divinities as well as the relevance of individual karmic status and personal effort. More specifically, they were alarmed at what they saw as the destructive social and moral implications of Hōnen's *senju nenbutsu* teaching.

While this analysis has centered on Jōkei, the most prolific and conspicuous author of the *kōshiki* genre, it extends quite seamlessly to Myōe. Like Jōkei, Myōe was a strong advocate and practitioner of monastic discipline and involved in numerous *kanjin* campaigns.

Within most historical overviews of the early Kamakura period, Jōkei and Myōe are perhaps the most conspicuous monks of the established schools. Indeed, they are frequently mentioned as a pair for good reason: both were trained in the most powerful monastic establishments of Nara (Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji, respectively); both left their home institutions to pursue the comparatively solitary path as reclusive monks (Jpn. *tonseisō*); both are noted for their devotion to Śākyamuni, Miroku, and the Kasuga deity; both are well known for their precept revival efforts; both had close relationships with powerful figures, such as Go-Toba, Kujo Kanezane, and Fujiwara Nagafusa;[83] and, perhaps the most telling reason for their prominence in contemporary research, both were outspoken critics of Hōnen's *senju*

nenbutsu movement and teachings. Finally, Jōkei and Myōe, as discussed above, were the most prolific authors of *kōshiki* ritual texts.

Many of the elements that characterized Jōkei's ideological perspective are also evident in Myōe's corpus. A perusal of the central figures to which his *kōshiki* were devoted reflects several of the features of Jōkei's collections. He is perhaps most famous for his four-part collection of *kōshiki* known as the *Shiza kōshiki* (1215), still performed annually on Kōyasan, including *Nehan kōshiki*, *Jūrokukan kōshiki*, *Yuishaku kōshiki*, and *Shari kōshiki*. As reflected in their respective titles, this collection is devoted to Śākyamuni's illustrious career from enlightenment to death. Other *kōshiki* by Myōe reflect a devotional pluralism similar to Jōkei's and an emphasis on the efficacy of a variety of practices. For example, in addition to Śākyamuni, he authored *kōshiki* devoted to Ākāśagarbha (Jpn. Kokūzō), Miroku, Bodhihdarma, and the fifty-five genuine teachers,[84] as well as *kōshiki* advocating the efficacy of sūtra chanting (*Jikyō kōshiki*), *dhāraṇī* recitation (*Kōmyō Shingon kōshiki*), and relic worship as noted above.[85]

Final reflections: *kōshiki* and Robert Wuthnow's theory of ideological discourse

In *Communities of Discourse*, Robert Wuthnow examines the "problem of articulation" – "the ways in which ideas are shaped by their social situations and yet manage to disengage from these situations."[86] The theoretical framework for his analysis of three ideological shifts in Western Europe – the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism – distinguishes between the environmental conditions, institutional contexts, and "action sequences" that constitute the social conditions that fostered these movements. Environmental conditions include the general social, cultural, political, and economic contours of the period; institutional contexts include the organizational structures – schools, churches, political parties, and so on – within which the underlying ideologies were created and disseminated; and action sequences include "the behavior of culture producers and consumers and the decisions of patrons, censors, political leaders, and others who affect the behavior of culture producers and their audiences."[87] This last element aims at grasping the importance of human agency in the process of ideological discourse.

Wuthnow further delineates three processes by which ideologies are articulated. The first is production – that is, the modalities, such as books, sermons, speeches, and so forth, that carry the discourse. Selection, the second of Wuthnow's three processes, refers to the elevation and popularization of certain cultural products. Third, institutionalization identifies the routinized mechanisms that institutionalize certain modes of discourse. Wuthnow is particularly interested in the ways in which an ideology transcends the cultural context from which it emerges and achieves some degree of longevity.

The analysis offered above applies Wuthnow's theoretical scaffold to the important shifts taking place in early medieval Japan by examining a mode of discourse, *kōshiki*, emerging from the established Nara schools or, at least, prominent monks affiliated with those institutions. The relevant environmental conditions include the shift in political power and wealth from the aristocratic and imperial families to the military clans; declining state support of the established Buddhist institutions; the material destruction and general deterioration of those institutions; the broader social disruption that was a by-product of the political shifts; and, finally, a notable increase in the number of monks connected to the established schools who moved to the margins of institutional control. All of these factors contributed to a context of competition for devotional allegiance and patronage within the Buddhist sphere that fostered intense ideological debates. Monks like Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren wrote important tracts, sermons, and letters to their followers that articulated their ideological vision. The *kōshiki* liturgical genre served as a mode of production that articulated and disseminated important elements of an opposing ideology to a wider audience by a handful of prominent monks within, but somewhat independent of, the established schools.

By focusing specifically on Jōkei's *kōshiki* collection we can see that it expresses an ideology in clear tension with the new paradigm of liberation emerging from the Tendai sphere of influence. In opposition to the nonlinear character of the new soteriological paradigm, Jōkei emphasized the more gradual bodhisattva path. Instead of a single condition and all-inclusive qualities of the new paradigm, he asserted the numerous practices and objects of devotion *in accordance with individual capacity* – the necessary Buddhist pluralism. Over against the minimization of *karma*'s moral implications, Jōkei frequently qualified promises of efficacy with a reminder of the relevant implications of our thoughts and deeds.

Because the so-called "New Kamakura" sects eventually dominated in Japan (albeit several centuries after their founding), we might assume that the new, more exclusivistic, paradigm of liberation associated with them ultimately transcended its contextual parameters and became the dominant ideology of Japanese Buddhism more broadly. However, one could argue that the more pluralistic ideology evident in Jōkei's *kōshiki* texts has more in common with contemporary Japanese religion than the new paradigm's singular emphasis on one practice and one object of devotion. Reader and Tanabe, in their study of *genze riyaku* (this-worldly benefits), for example, emphasize the pluralistic character of contemporary Japanese religion. "Temples and shrines," they write, "recognize the importance of plurality and hence of reinforcing the power of prayers for practical benefits by utilizing more than one deity or shrine, especially in times of great need."[88] Almost all temples feature a variety of auspicious images that promise different practical and religious benefits. This plurality is true of Pure Land temples

as well. With respect to this pluralistic character, at least, contemporary Japanese religion is fundamentally confluent with premodern Japanese religion and the ideology of the established schools in early medieval Japan.

Jōkei's *kōshiki* liturgies contested, implicitly and explicitly, moves toward universalism and exclusive soteriological claims. They emphasized the importance of Buddhist pluralism, karmic causality, and a balance between individual effort and reliance on other powers available through the traditional divinities. For at least most of the Kamakura period, *kōshiki* appear to have been a mode of discourse that became popularly routinized, patronized, and eventually institutionalized in some settings – that is, performed on an annual basis. While the extent of their influence is impossible to measure, their volume and distinguished authorship suggest that they were at least perceived to be an effective means of discourse.

Notes

1 Niels Guelberg, "Buddhist Ceremonials (*kōshiki*) of Medieval Japan and Their Impact on Literature," *Annual of the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism*, 15 (1993), pp. 66–81.

2 Recent scholarship has highlighted the notable increase in *kanjin*, or fundraising activity, in the latter Heian and early Kamakura period, along with the conspicuous involvement of *hijiri* monks. Matsuo Kenji authored *Kanjin to hakai no chūseishi: chūsei Bukkyō no jisshō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1995), a study of *kanjin* activity among mostly reclusive (*tonseisō*) Ritsu monks. Similarly, Nakao Takashi's *Chūsei no kanjin hijiri to shari shinkō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001) examines the role of *shari* worship and *kanjin* efforts in the propagational activities of Chōgen, Eison, and Nichiren, in particular.

3 Kuroda Toshio, "Chūsei ni okeru kenmitsu taisei no tenkai," in *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975, pp. 433–435.

4 Nakao, pp. 131–132 and 154–155.

5 Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp. 228–236.

6 As Stone makes clear, however, this inclination toward a singular factor was not limited to the new movements, since it is also discernible in the emphasis on the fundamental truth of nonduality or faith (as opposed to discernment) throughout Tendai literature. Stone perceptively observes that "this emphasis on a single condition provides an example of how similar conceptual structures were appropriated in ideologically different ways" (Stone, p. 231). She also identifies a number of theories concerning the origin of this single-condition emphasis. They include the competing lineages within Tendai in the context of an emphasis on secret transmissions; the increasing tendency toward hierarchical arrangements of teachings and practices; and a response to the "perceived soteriological uncertainties of the age" (p. 232).

7 Stone's contribution is not just in identifying verifiable characteristics of the newly emerging sects during the Kamakura period. Perhaps more important is her evidence that these features were shared with Tendai, the dominant "old" Buddhist school of the day. A similar trend is also evident in much Shingon discourse of the latter Heian era that emphasized the doctrine of "Buddhahood in this very body" (Jpn. *sokushin jōbutsu*). Brian Ruppert also observes that the

"revolutionary" elements generally associated with "Kamakura Buddhism," such as simple practice, a focus on the salvific power of Śākyamuni (Nichiren and Zen schools), and popular access, including women, are evident in the veneration of relics throughout the latter half of the Heian period. Ruppert suggests that "the seeds for the activities and ideas associated with new Buddhism were not only planted but taking root in the discursive and ritual soil of mid-Heian society." He concludes that the new schools were more "elaborations" of trends within the established schools than "novel formulations." Brian D. Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 14–15.

8 Tsukudo Reikan, "*Kōshiki* no rekishiteki kōsatsu," in *Chūsei geibun no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Yuseido, 1966, pp. 324–325.

9 Taishō University (in Tokyo) sponsored an annual research group (*Kōshiki kenkyūkai*, hereafter KK), assembled for the specific purpose of studying *kōshiki*, that met from 1991 to 1995. Their published findings, including analyses and annotated reproductions of a number of texts, have contributed significantly to scholastic understanding of this literary and liturgical genre. See *Kōshiki* kenkyū-kai (KK), *Taishō daigaku sōgō Bukkyū kenkyūjo nenpō*, 1991–1995.

10 A *hyōbyaku* (also pronounced *hyōhyaku*) derives from the tradition that the Buddha states, at the outset of a sermon or practice session, his intent for the audience at hand. *Sōgō Bukkyō daijiten*, Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1987, vol. 1, p. 372.

11 Guelberg, 1993, p. 265.

12 See Nishiyama Atsushi, "*Kōshiki* kara mita Jōkei no shinkō: *Kannon kōshiki* o chūshin ni," in *Chūsei jiinshi no kenkyū*, Kuroda Toshio, ed., Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1988, vol. 2, pp. 231–256, and 265.

13 Guelberg, 1993, p. 263.

14 For example, Arai Kōjun links Jōkei's *Seigan shari kōshiki* to a *kanjin* campaign dating to Kenkyū 7 (1196.4.14) that raised funds for a thousand-day "Shari kō" at Kasagi-dera. Arai Kōjun, "Myōe Shōnin no Jūmujin-in shari *kōshiki*," *Buzan Kyōgaku Taikai Kiyō*, 5 (1977), p. 79. See also Hiraoka Jōkai, *Tōdaiji Sōshō shōnin no kenkyū narabini shiryō*, vol. 3, Tokyo: Daiso Shuppan, 1960, p. 238. Hiraoka links Jōkei's five-part *Shari kōshiki* to the *Shaka nenbutsu e* of Tōshōdaiji, where it is still used today (Hiraoka, 3: 615). Jōkei's *Chūshū hōon kōshiki* is based on a lecture he gave on the history and doctrine of the Hossō school before cloistered emperor Go-Toba. *Chūshū hōon kōshiki. Kōshiki* Database (KDB) 294. On-line database of extant *kōshiki* maintained by Niels Guelberg, Waseda University (http://faculty.web.waseda.ac.jp/guelberg/koshiki/kdb/main/kousiki.htm). A donation from Go-Toba is recorded, which Guelberg connects to a performance of the *kōshiki* by Jōkei and dates to the end of the third month of the same year (Neils Guelberg, "Gedatsubō Jōkei to Go-Toba-in," in *Chūsei bungaku no tenkai to Bukkyō*, Yamada, ed., Tokyo: Ōfū, 2000, pp. 427–429). Finally, the *Miroku kōshiki* that is the subject of this chapter may have been linked to a *kanjin* campaign to reconstruct the Hokuendō of Kōfuku-ji. See the analysis that follows. I am very grateful to Neils Guelberg for these references.

15 According to the *Nijūgo zanmai shiki* transmitted within the Tendai school, the text was completed on the twenty-third day of the fifth month in 986. Yamada Shōzen, "*Kōshiki* – sono seiritsu to tenkai," in *Bukkyō no bungaku kōza, daikan 8: Shōdō no bungaku*, Itō Horiyuki, Imanari Genshō, and Yamada Shōzen, eds, Tokyo: Benseisha, 1995, p. 23.

16 Edward Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Japanese Studies, 1988, p. 16.

17 Yamada 1995, p. 26.

18 See ibid., pp. 28–9 for a detailed analysis of this issue.
19 For a more detailed discussion of this evolving popularity of *kōshiki* as propagational tool, see ibid., pp. 27–30.
20 As noted above, Niels Guelberg maintains a database (*Kōshiki* Database, KDB) on-line detailing extant *kōshiki* texts by author and subject, along with many actual texts, manuscript locations, and modern editions. The list in the following note reflects the database as of November 2004.
21 A collection of thirteen of Jōkei's *kōshiki*, along with accompanying articles and commentaries, was published recently in Japan. Yamada Shōzen, ed., *Jōkei kōshikishū*, Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo Kenkyū Sōsho, 2, Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 2000. The most prominent authors within the genre, listed chronologically with the number of attributed texts, include: Kūkai (774–835), 14; Saichō (767–822), 9; Genshin (942–1017), 10; Kakuban (1095–1143), 16; Hōnen (1133–1212), 1; Jien (1155–1225), 4; Jōkei (1155–1213), 30; Myōe (1173–1232), 16; Gyōnen (1240–1321), 1. Those attributed to Kūkai and Saichō are widely agreed to be apocryphal and most of those traditionally credited to Genshin are of questionable attribution as well.
22 Examples include Myōe's *Shiza kōshiki* (Reading on the Four Sessions) performed within the Shingon school and Pure Land monk Yōkan's (1033–1111) *Ōjō kōshiki* (Reading on Birth in the Pure Land). Guelberg 1993, p. 261. I had the fortune of attending the *Joraku-e* held at Kongobu-ji on Kōyasan in February of 2003, which incorporates Myōe's *Shiza kōshiki* and celebrates the Buddha's entry into *nirvāṇa*. The all-night ritual, involving at least 100 monks and ten nuns, takes place every year around February 14, and was attended by over 100 lay-persons as well.
23 There are several useful biographical overviews of Jōkei. In particular, see Hiraoka 3, 576–648; Tanaka Hisao, "Chosakakusha ryakuden," in *Kamakura kyū Bukkyō*, Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao, eds, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971, 461–99; and Ueda Sachiko, "Jōkei no shūkyō katsudō ni tsuite," *Historia*, 75 (1977), pp. 27–46. In English, see Robert Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism: A Minority Report*, Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1987, pp. 66–75, and James L. Ford, "A Life Ignored: Jōkei (1155–1213) and 'Old' Kamakura Buddhism Reexamined," PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1999, pp. 12–23.
24 The annual lecture on the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* given at Kōfuku-ji in the tenth month.
25 According to the *Kasuga Gongen genki* (Miracles of the Kasuga Deity), the Kasuga deity appeared in the form of a woman before Myōe. She professed her devotion for Jōkei and especially Myōe. Just before departing, she asked Myōe to pass along an appeal to Jōkei. The *genki* states: "'As for Gedatsu-bō,' she then went on, 'consider that both of you are the same age. It is extraordinary how deeply one feels for him!' She repeated this four or five times. 'However,' she continued, 'I cannot accept his living in seclusion. Do tell him so.'" Royall Tyler, *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 274.
26 For useful overviews of Miroku devotion at Kasagi-dera, see Janet Goodwin's *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, and Karen Brock's "Awaiting Maitreya at Kasagi," in *Maitreya: the Future Buddha*, Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, eds, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 214–247.
27 Maitreya is credited as the author of numerous important Yogācāra texts, such as *Yogācārabhūmi* (Jpn. *Yugashiji-ron*), the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (Jpn. *Daijō-shōgon-kyō-ron*), and the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (Jpn. *Chūben-ron*). Along with

numerous crucial Yogācāra ideas, he is also said to have introduced the view of three aspects to the body of the Buddha (Skt *trikāya*).

28 See, for example, Hiraoka, 3: 598–599; Tomimura, "Gedatsu Shōnin to Kannon shinkō," *Risshō Daigaku Shigakukai*, 40 (1976), pp. 21–32; Yasui Shūkō, "Jōkei no shūkyō no katsudō," *Nihon Shi Kenkyū*, 224 (1981), pp. 36–37; and Kusunoki Junshō, "Jōkei no Jōdokan to sono shinkō: Miroku shinkō kara Kannon shinkō e," *Ryūkoku Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo Kiyō*, 6 (1985), pp. 22–39.

29 Hiraoka, 3: 238.

30 Ibid., 3: 232.

31 All four of these texts are included in Hiraoka's *Tōdaiji Sōshō shōnin no kenkyū narabini shiryō*. There are two three-part versions of the *Miroku kōshiki*, one of which is clearly dated 1201 and authored by Jōkei. The other is widely attributed to Jōkei, but the manuscript does not identify him specifically. See Neils Guelberg, "Hankoku-eiin sareteiru *kōshiki* no burui betsu ichiran," *Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo Nenpō*, 18 (1996), p. 61, and Kōhsiki kenkyūkai, "Jōkei no *kōshiki* sandai," *Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo Nenpō*, 13 (1991), p. 178. A five-part version is dated 1196. The *Tosotsu rakuyō* is undated, but because of Jōkei's noticeable shift in devotion to Kannon's Mt. Fudaraku after his move to Kaijūsenji, it is reasonable to assume that it was written during his time at Kasagi. See Hiraoka, 3: 201–214, for the actual texts.

32 See Fukihara Shōshin ("Gedatsu Shōnin to sono nembutsu," *Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai Nempō*, 34 (1969), p. 115), and Kusunoki Junshō ("Jōkei no Hōnen Jōdo-kyō hihan ni kan suru ikkōsatsu," *Ryūkoku Daigaku Ronshū*, 434–435 (1989), p. 232) for support of this date. Yamasaki Keiki ("*Hossō shinyōshō* ni okeru nembutsugi," *Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, 18/19 (1961), p. 134) notes that because the text was originally part of a collection, entitled *Kasagi shamon Jōkei sō*, it has always been associated with his Kasagi years, but that leaves more than a fifteen-year window (1193–1208).

33 Shinen's father was Fujiwara Tadamichi (1097–1164), who succeeded his own father as *kampaku* and later served as regent at the accession of Sutoku-tennō.

34 See Guelberg's analysis of this *kōshiki*. "*Miroku kōshiki*," in *Jōkei kōshikishū*, Yamada Shōzen, ed., pp. 287–8.

35 All textual references refer to the published version of this text in Yamada, pp. 77–91. See also Hiraoka, 3: 205–211, and T. 84.2729. Yamada, p. 77: 14–16.

36 Yamada, p. 78: 18–20.

37 For example, Vasubandhu's "Treatise on the Sūtra of Limitless Life" (*Wu-liang-shu-ching yu-p'o-t'i-she yüan-sheng chieh*) on birth in Amida's Pure Land, important throughout East Asia, sequentially describes "five contemplative gates" (Jpn. *go nen mon*) as a visualization practice. In Japanese, this one-fascicle text is known as *Muryōjukyō ubadaisha ganshō ge* (T. 26.1524) or by a variety of other abbreviated titles (e.g. *Jōdo ron* [*Jingtu lun*], Ōshōron [*Wangsheng lun*], and so forth). They include worship, praise, aspiration for birth in Amida's Pure Land, visualization of the Pure Land, and transfer of merit [T. 26.1524: 231b:10–15]. The text explains that the first four are preparation for the final goal of benefiting others (that is, perfect virtue in oneself for the benefit of others). Richard K. Payne has argued convincingly that the entire sequence constitutes "a single, ritualized visualization practice," and the Buddhist tradition is, of course, replete with such visualization guides. See Richard K. Payne's "The Five Contemplative Gates of Vasubandhu's *Rebirth Treatise* as a Ritualized Visualization Practice," in *The Pure Land Tradition: History and Development*, James Foard, Michael Solomon, and Richard Payne, eds, Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1996, p. 243.

38 Yamada, pp. 78–79: 23–24.
39 Ibid., p. 79: 23–26.
40 Ibid., p. 79: 32–34.
41 Ibid., p. 81: 42–45.
42 A *dhāraṇī* is a comparatively long *mantra* believed to hold esoteric powers by virtue of capturing the essence of Buddhist teachings. Generally rendered phonetically as *toloni* in Chinese, *dhāraṇī* may also appear as *ju*, or *shinju*.
43 Yamada, p. 82: 54.
44 Ibid., p. 82: 59–60.
45 Ibid., p. 83: 64–67.
46 Ibid., p. 83: 70–71.
47 That is, sweetness, freshness, lightness, purity, scentlessness, cleansing, and nourishment.
48 Miroku resides in Tosotsu (*Tuśita*) heaven, as Śākyamuni did before him, preparing for his descent into the world as the next Buddha. Upon descending, some 5,670,000,000 years in the future, Miroku will restore the dharma in the world by giving three lectures beneath a dragon-flower tree. All those who attend Miroku's dragon-flower assembly will realize full enlightenment.
49 Yamada, p. 87: 104–108.
50 Ibid., p. 87: 109.
51 Jpn. *Embudai*; according to Indian cosmology, we are now living on this great island south of Mt. Sumeru.
52 Yamada, p. 88: 119–121.
53 This is an abbreviation for *shijūkujūn yoi den*, the forty-nine story jewel palace of Miroku.
54 Yamada, p. 89: 127–129.
55 *Gengō* (Skt. *Bhadrakalpa*) designates the present age of one thousand buddhas. For this reason, it is also known as the "good *kalpa.*" Śākyamuni is the fourth buddha of this *kalpa*.
56 The first of five stages of a bodhisattva, known as the stage of accumulation (Jpn. *shiryō-i*), actually involves thirty stages of the mind (Jpn. *jūekō*). These include the ten stages of security, the ten stages of profiting others, and the ten stages of transferring merit to others. It appears Jōkei has abbreviated these three to designate this first stage on the path.
57 Yamada, p. 90: 138–140.
58 Ibid., pp. 90–91: 142–147.
59 See Hiraoka, 3: 201–416. For Hiraoka's analysis of Jōkei's impact on Sōshō's Miroku worship, see p. 666.
60 For research related specifically to Jōkei's devotion to Śākyamuni, see Narita Jōkan ("Jōkei no Shakya shinkō no keifu," in *Bukkyō ronsō*, vol. 6, Tokyo: Jodoshu kyōgakuin, 1958, pp. 72–75), Tomimura Takafumi ("Gedatsu shōnin Jōkei no Shaka shinkō ni tsuite," *Ryūkyū Daigaku Hōbungakubu Kiyō: Shigaku* 32, 1989, pp. 139–148), and Yasui Shūkō. With respect to Jōkei's influence, see Nakao, p. 66. Paul Groner also notes Jōkei's influence on Eison's veneration of Śākyamuni. See "Icons and Relics in Eison's Religious Activities" in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, eds, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 121.
61 T. 84.2728: 886a:5–7.
62 See Hiraoka, 3: 648; Narita, pp. 72–75; Hayami Tasuku, *Miroku shinkō: mō hitotsu no jōdo shinkō*, Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1971, pp. 193–202; and Inahori Taitsu, "Jōkei no minshū kyūsai: sono shūkyō katsudō no shisōteki kiban," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, 27/2 (1979), p. 650. All of these scholars perceive Jōkei's

emphasis on *shari* worship as well as precept revival, evident to the end of his life, as manifestations of his devotion to Śākyamuni.

63 *Ryōzen*, generally translated "Vulture Peak," where Sakyamuni is said to have expounded the *Lotus Sūtra*, is also a Pure Land where one can be reborn. According to the Nichiren sect, followers of the *Lotus* teaching will be born there.

64 Morrell 1987, p. 77.

65 Fukihara Shōshin contends that both were in direct response to the popularity of Hōnen's *senju-nenbutsu* movement, but this claim is highly debatable and tends to anachronistically inflate the impact of Hōnen's movement. See Fukihara ("Gedatsu Shōnin to sono nembutsu," *Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai Nempō*, 34 (1969), p. 114) for a discussion and details of these *nenbutsu-e.*

66 Yamada, p. 85: 94–96.

67 Yamada, p. 85: 100.

68 *Nyoirin-kyō*, the abbreviated title of the *Nyoirin-darani-kyō* (T. 20.1080), a text that praises the virtues of Kannon bosatsu of which a variety of translations are extant.

69 *Kannon kōshiki*, 1201B version (T. 84.2728: 886c:25–887a:25); emphasis added.

70 For a detailed analysis of Jōkei's perspective here, see Tomimura, 1976.

71 *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon*, *Nihon Daizōkyō* (hereafter, ND), 100 vols, Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1973–1976, vol. 64, Hossōshū-shōso 3, p. 33a: 7–11.

72 Ibid., 33a: 17–33b:2.

73 *Shin'yō shō*, ND 63, p. 353a: 16–353b.

74 *Kanjin shōjō enmyō no koto*, ND 64, p. 23a: 17–17.

75 *Kan'yū dōhō ki*, ND 64, p. 10a: 7–10.

76 Jōfuku Masanobu makes a forceful argument for this view. See "Jōkei no Bukkyō shisō no tokusei," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, 41/2 (1993), pp. 661–665.

77 *Shin'yō shō, Kamakura kyū Bukkyō* (*Nihon shisō taikei 15*), Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao, eds, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971, p. 313.

78 *Kannon kōshiki*, 3-part, 1201B, Yamada, p. 163: 18–19.

79 *Miroku kōshiki*, T. 84.2729: 888a:4–8.

80 See Nishiyama (p. 249) for a discussion of *zange* within these *kōshiki* texts. He also cites the importance of *zange* in conjunction with dependence on "other-power."

81 *Busshari Kannon daishi hotsugammon*, ND 64, p. 33b.

82 "Pluralism" is not a term without problems, I admit. In its modern usage, within the context of religious studies, it often refers to multiplicity among a variety of religious systems. That is clearly not my intention here, since Jōkei was fundamentally "Buddhist" and did not recognize soteriological alternatives beyond Buddhism proper, as far as we can tell. Nevertheless, pluralism seems to me to be the best term to describe Jōkei's recognition and advocacy of the many efficacious practices, objects of devotion, texts, and so forth within the Buddhist tradition that any devotee might turn to for help. Thus, "pluralism" here is limited by the adjective "Buddhist" to recognize this constraint.

83 Nagafusa took the tonsure under Jōkei, aided in Jōkei precept revival efforts, and inherited Kaijūsenji at his death. However, he also maintained a close relationship with Myōe and was very likely Myōe's primary benefactor in building Kōzanji (1206), where his portrait hangs beside Myōe's in the meditation hall. See George Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*, Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard Universtiy, 1992, p. 75; see also Yasui, p. 55.

84 The fifty-five genuine teachers (Jpn. *Gujūgo zenchishiki*) are noted in the *Huayan Sūtra* chapter on entering the realm of reality.

85 For a complete list of *kōshiki* attributed to Myōe, see Guelberg's *Kōshiki* Database.

86 Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 5.

87 Ibid., p. 7.

88 Ian Reader and George J. Tanabe Jr, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998, p. 189.

7

THE BODY OF TIME AND THE DISCOURSE OF PRECEPTS

Mark T. Unno

Introduction

From the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, several prominent Japanese monks attempted to initiate a revival of the monastic precepts based on the classical Dharmaguptaka Vinaya rooted in early Indian tradition. Some of these figures, such as Myōe Koben and Gedatsu Jōkei, were aware of one another's efforts in this regard, but many others were not. In this sense, calling it a "precept revival movement" as some have done is probably overstating the case. Nevertheless, the fact that a significant number of high-ranking ecclesiasticals initiated similar actions indicates that certain conditions and discourses were prevalent at the time.

Of the many themes that ran through the discourse of medieval Japanese Buddhism, time held a special place. More precisely, it was *mappō*, the language of the dharma's decline into its final degenerate age, that held so many Japanese of that time captive. Although references to *mappō* can be found as early as the eighth century in Japan,[1] this discourse reached a climax during the late Heian and early Kamakura periods. And although *mappō* is often associated with the so-called "New Kamakura Buddhism" (Jpn. *Kamakura shin bukkyō*) of the Pure Land and Nichiren movements, it was in fact invoked widely by many literati, political, and religious figures, reflecting a pervasive sense of discontent, unease, disorder, and degeneration. This is true whether one is speaking of so-called "establishment" (Jpn. *kenmitsu taisei*) figures such as Jien or Kujo Kanezane, literati such as Kamo no Chomei or Fujiwara Teika, or so-called "revolutionaries" such as Nichiren or Hōnen. *Mappō* proved useful both in terms of its descriptive power and as a portal into Buddhist soteriology; the simultaneous lamentation of and appeal to *mappō* was by no means the exclusive province of "rebel monks" leading insurrections but a discourse woven into the very

fabric of the times. It is against this backdrop of *mappō* that so many saw a need for a revival of proper monastic practice.

However, the heavy reliance on this notion tended to create a significant problem for those who invoked it. On the one hand, the fact that things were not as they were supposed to be meant that one could freely pronounce one's own solutions, as many in fact did. On the other, the pervasiveness and long-term status of this phenomenon meant that it would be difficult to formulate a convincing strategy for overcoming it. As the last and final stage of the dharma's decline, *mappō* was said to last 10,000 years once it was in place – as good as eternity. The concept tended to fix the problematic in place as well as identify it. The strain of those who sought enlightenment in the face of *mappō* often showed in the ways in which it forced compromises or even abandonment of any real hope of change in the present conditions of medieval Japan.

Pure Land figures such as Hōnen looked almost exclusively to birth in the Pure Land, and a number of his followers even sought an early birth there by committing suicide as attested to by the *Ōjōden* (Chronicles of Birth). The Tendai prelate Jien offered that, although one could not entirely overcome the conditions of *mappō*, the course of history could be wrenched out of its apparently inevitable decline by the return of his clansmen to power; while he thus appealed to a religio-politico revival in the public sphere, in private he nevertheless placed his faith in the *nenbutsu* and Amida's Pure Land, just like Hōnen. Even figures like Jōkei who decried the exclusivity and pessimism of Hōnen's Pure Land movement could do no better than to claim that *mappō* had not yet arrived because Japan was historically at the prior stage of the semblance dharma (Jpn. *zōbō*). The Zen figure Dōgen denied the validity of *mappō* altogether, but he did so from his monastery deep in the mountains, and it seems no one heard him in the capital city of Kyoto where much of *mappō* discourse was concentrated. A number of literati such as Kamo no Chōmei became recluses, doing their best to hide themselves from the chaos of *mappō*, not even making an attempt at reaching out to their suffering brethren as the bodhisattva ideal prescribed. Nichiren railed against his corrupt contemporaries and fought for radical reform, but he was persecuted and exiled as a madman and a public nuisance.

In hindsight, we know that the predominance of *mappō* discourse would begin to give way by the mid to late fourteenth century and by the fifteenth century no longer hold the attention of Buddhists as it had in earlier times. However, for the denizens of Japan in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, especially in the religious and cultural center of Kyoto and neighboring regions, *mappō* was unfolding in their very midst and seemed likely to persist for centuries.

The cultural and material conditions of existence – in the form of Buddhist practices and institutions, artistic and literary endeavor, government,

and warfare – were embedded in a discourse of time that appears to have reached an inertial immobility of significant proportions. The mind reached for enlightenment, but the body was mired in *mappō.* Buddhahood was the goal, but where were the signs of the *dharmakāya* in the material world, of the embodied buddha?

Among the Buddhist leaders of the time, this question vexed perhaps no one more than it did Myōe Koben, a monk of the Kegon and Shingon schools who was regarded as a virtual saint in his own lifetime, served as abbot of Kōzanji, and was an advisor to the *de facto* ruler Hojo Yasutoki. In Myōe's case the perceived distance – both temporal and geographical – from any tangible sense of the buddha was so great that he sought to leave Japan altogether. As a youth of thirteen he seriously contemplated suicide, echoing some of the sentiments of Pure Land devotees who sought to accelerate their arrival in the Pure Land. As an adult he twice plotted escapes to India where he could at least see the land of the Buddha although he could not alter the temporal conditions of *mappō.* The fact remains, however, that he neither took his own life nor left Japan for a pilgrimage to India.

Instead, he is well known for having been one of a number of prominent clerics of his day to call for a revival of the monastic precepts. He made strict adherence to the precepts a centerpiece of monastic practice in his own community and advocated their revival as an antidote to the degeneracy of the Buddhist establishment. According to Ishida Mizumaro, there were two main Buddhist responses to the times, depending upon whether one saw *mappō* as a matter of cosmic fate or human failure. Those like Hōnen who saw it as a cosmically preordained had to appeal to the transcendent power of cosmic buddhas such as Amida in order to be released from this defiled world, but those like Myōe who saw it as arising from human degeneracy could hope for the resuscitation of human agency through revival of the precepts. Failure on a cosmic scale required a cosmic solution; failure on a human scale was amenable to human rectification. Certainly, the focus on monastic forms implied an emphasis on historical agency.

Yet reforming monastic practice was not like fixing a broken house, localized and discrete. Whether *mappō* was preordained or manmade, its scale was cosmic, and the incremental tinkering of human beings on the stage of history seemed futile in righting its wrongs. This also meant that the discourse of monastic revival could not be effected on the terms of conventional language. Extraordinary times called for extraordinary measures, or in this case extraordinary language. From examination of Myōe's statements and those attributed to him, it becomes apparent that he stretched the discourse beyond the bounds of conventional logic in several different ways in his attempts to reach across the chasms of time to buddhahood. What these different conceptions of time tell us are the ways in which diverse, sometimes competing, discourses were combined in an effort to face the

challenges of *mappō*. They reveal both the creativity and complications of Myōe's discourses as he attempted to maintain his balance between this world of material and social existence and the world of religious yearning beyond.

Myōe, *mappō*, and the precepts

The references to *mappō* in the writings and statements of Myōe are abundant and occur throughout his life. In the *Myōe shonin ikun* (The Final Instructions of Myōe Shonin) alone, a record Myōe's statements made by his disciple Koshin shortly after the latter's death, twelve out of the fifty-two items focus on some aspect of *mappō*.[2] In many of them Myōe, like others of his time such as Jien, harkened back to a golden age, but whereas Jien focused on the golden age of ancient Japan, Myōe looked to the India of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni:

> King Prasenajit said to the Buddha, "My mother is dead. If there is anyone who can restore her to life, I will give up my land, my palace, my wife and my children. I will even give up my life in return." People living in this day and age may feel grief, but surely there is no one who grieves as deeply as that king. Thus it is quite clear that a vast distance separates ancient times from these Latter Days [final age], and the great country [India] from this barbarous land. It is very sad to think of.[3]

Myōe felt that if only he could be in the presence of the Buddha, then everything would be all right: "If I had been born in India, I would not have had to do anything. I would have made a pilgrimage to the five holy sites in India, travelling to my heart's content and paying homage to the Tathāgata. I would have had no need for study or practice."[4] His sense of devotion was so strong that he expressed himself in familial terms, seeing the Buddha as his parent. There are numerous such expressions, but perhaps the most dramatic is to be found in the *Zui'i betsuganmon* (The Vow Inscriptions According to the Separate Vows [for Each Bodhisattva]):[5]

> Following the *Parinirvāṇa* of my great merciful father, the great blessed teacher, the Tathāgata Śākyamuni, I am the child of the Dharma that remains in this small country, this land on the periphery. . . . I have been abandoned by my merciful father, and I have been left alone in the burning abode [of this world] without hope of escape. Having been abandoned by my father, I have lost the holy treasure and am now in abject poverty. . . . Devoted to the merciful father Śākyamuni, a profound thirst [for him] arises, and tears of grief stream down like rain.

Since there was no way that Myōe could meet Śākyamuni in the flesh, his next best hope was to visit the land of his spiritual father. He made two plans to go to India, once at the age of twenty-nine in 1202 and again at the age of thirty-two in 1205, going so far as to calculate the number of days it would take and the provisions he would have to prepare.[6] Due to various circumstances he had to abandon his plans both times, but his yearnings did not subside: "People with truly strong will are those who . . . hold their lives at naught and risk everything to journey to India. . . . I feel a special envy for such people."[7] Barring a trip to India, the closest he could come to meeting his guru in person was to follow in his footsteps. This meant first and foremost re-enacting and embodying the life of the Buddha by observing the precepts; for Myōe that was the decisive difference between the practitioners of Śākyamuni's time and those of *mappō*.[8]

> If we priests were living in the age of the Buddha, we would never dare regard ourselves as equal to even the lowliest novice-monk. We should be ashamed, therefore, to put on airs of great masters.[9]
>
> In the time of the Buddha, there was no drunkenness among the monks. Such offenses as murder, stealing, or adultery were not yet manifest.[10]
>
> Most monks these days envisage the Buddha Dharma they have chanced to learn not as the key to emancipation but as a means for attaining high rank, a trivial, contemptible thing. . . . What has become of Buddhist practice in this land, so remote from India, in these depraved Latter Days?[11]

Thus, in the age of *mappō*, the simplest formula for Myōe to close the distance between his time and the golden age of Śākyamuni was to approach through the personal life of the founder. First, he envisioned that the fastest way to do so would be to visit the land of the founder. When his attempts proved to be of no avail, *imitatio buddha* by way of the precepts became the next best alternative.[12]

Throughout his life Myōe gave prime importance to the precepts. Although the other two learnings of meditation and wisdom were also important, Myōe saw the precepts as the foundation of practice in a time of *mappō*. In the classical model of the three learnings, the precepts were merely the point of entry in the higher attainments of meditation and wisdom, but in a time of *mappō*, they formed the cornerstone of practice:

> Within the three learnings of precepts, meditation, and wisdom, the two dharmas of meditation and wisdom are profound and complex. The one gate of the precepts is the way to enter the buddhadharma without too much ado. It stops the evil karma of sentient beings who are at the first gate of practice; it is not complex but easy. It is

> like a doctor who knows where the moxacautery points are and marks them. As one reaches deeper levels, so too do these precepts become more profound and [eventually] come to interpenetrate meditation and wisdom. Thus, it is said that the way is [one] with meditation and [one] with the precepts.[13]

He sought to observe the precepts scrupulously himself, as he followed the practice of the *uposatha*, gave lectures on individual precepts, administered the precepts to numerous monastics and lay followers, and even saw dreams of having discussions on the precepts with Vinaya masters who had already died:

> On the eleventh night of the same month in 1220, I saw a dream after seated meditation. The Vinaya master Gyoshin who had passed away has [actually] secluded himself in Takao having brought the great master's [commentary on] the *Fanwang jing* [*Brahma-net Sūtra*], and he said to [Myōe] Koben, "I [now] read this commentary." I, Koben, accepted this commentary and took it in my hands. It was a wondrous book.[14]

Just how important the precepts were to him is perhaps most evident from the report of his followers who recorded his last words, "I come from among those who maintain the precepts."[15] While such an expression was most unusual for the final words of a Buddhist monk, they were so characteristic of Myōe. In order to implement the precepts in his own life and in the life of his followers, Myōe made use of the whole range of resources: the classical Dharmaguptaka precepts, the sūtra precepts of the Nikaya literature, the bodhisattva precepts of the *Fanwang jing*, the *sanmaya* precepts of esoteric Buddhism, and the threefold pure precepts which were often administered as a preliminary ritual to the conferral of the fifty-eight bodhisattva precepts. He also formulated his own set of monastic codes similar to the *shingi* of the Zen schools, and the relation between the bodhisattva precepts, the Dharmaguptaka precepts, and the shingi is discussed elsewhere.[16]

Although Myōe received the Dharmaguptaka precepts at the ordination platform of Todaiji, the seat of the Kegon school, and eventually became abbot of the Kegon temple-complex of Kozanji, he began as a novice under his uncle Jogaku at the Shingon temple of Jingoji, and later received the transmission of the *denbō kanjō* (Skt. *ācāryābhiṣeka*, also Jpn. *ajari i kanjō*; that is, initiation or ordination as a master of tantric Buddhism) in which the three *sanmaya* precepts were first administered as a preliminary ritual.[17] He retained his dual status as both a Kegon and Shingon monk; consequently, both exoteric and esoteric elements of thought and praxis played important roles in his understanding of the precepts throughout his career.

Furthermore, in *A Record of Expositions on the Precepts*, the three treasures (Jpn. *sanki kai*) were also listed as part of the regular recitation of the

uposatha, along with the bodhisattva and Dharmaguptaka precepts. And in making use of such categories from the sūtra precepts as the eight precepts, Myōe did not merely adopt past interpretations but formulated his own, as can be seen in his *Instructions for Administering the Eight Precepts* (*Hassaikai shidai*).[18]

With all of these different categories of precepts available, Myōe had the flexibility to respond to different situations in a wide variety of ways. At the same time, he would be challenged throughout his life to find appropriate ways to do so. The quest to find the most appropriate response to each situation eventually found expression in the idea of *arubekiyowa*, the principle of acting "as appropriate" to each circumstance: "People should maintain the seven characters of *arubekiyowa.* This means to comport oneself as appropriate with respect to the three acts [of body, mind, and speech] and the four deportments [of walking, standing, sitting, and lying down]."[19]

As appropriate to each time

For Myōe, the problem of time was inseparable from that of understanding and implementing the precepts because the precepts were so intimately related to the problem of *mappō* and the historical figure of Śākyamuni. The numerous sources for the precepts, moreover, made it necessary for Myōe to employ multiple conceptions of time. Time appears to have operated in Myōe's writings and statements concerning the precepts in at least five different ways: modified historical, cosmic, visionary, oneiric, and archeological time. These are not categories used by Myōe himself, but they form a useful taxonomy for differentiating the ways in which time functioned in his discourse. The distinction between these functions of time are not fixed, and they can combine in several ways to produce a complex constellation of events and practices.

Modified historical time

Mappō was first of all a problem of historical time. It was in principle observable by all, it could be and was chronicled by those who witnessed it, and it operated discursively, such that the present unfolded in relation to but distinct from the past. For Myōe, the problem of *mappō* presented itself in its most perplexing form through the lens of historical time. On the one hand, if the Buddhism of Śākyamuni recorded in the sūtras was true, then these sūtras transmitted through history provided him with the standard to judge all times and especially his own time. On the other, history posed the greatest obstacle to realizing the norm that had been handed down through the ages, since the historical decline culminating in *mappō* could not easily be reversed.

As Faure notes, historical, linear conceptions of time can often be seen in writings on the Vinaya.[20] When the historical life of the *saṅgha* as a religious

community is the focus of transmitting religious truth, then the Vinaya and the record of its transmission constitute the lifeline connecting the past origin of the *saṅgha* in the time of Śākyamuni with the present. For example, "the historical consciousness of the Vinaya school derived from the necessity to trace back the emergence of monastic rules to particular events in the life of the Buddha."[21] One of the most graphic illustrations of this historical consciousness can be seen in the format of the *Dotted Record*, a version of the Vinaya transmitted to China and "allegedly written down at the First Council and subsequently dotted at every annual assembly (Skt. *pravāranā*)."[22]

The straight line leading back to the time of Śākyamuni is disrupted, however, when a discourse calling for the revival of the Vinaya is inscribed in conjunction with the concept of *mappō*. If *mappō* is understood to be the expression of a linear decline, then it comes into direct conflict with the Vinaya as an expression of linear progress. One solution to this is to introduce relative fluctuations of progress and decline. If *mappō* and the continual transmission of the Vinaya are relativized, then the result is a modulated line in which time marches onwards but has its ups and downs, peaks and valleys. In such records as the *Myōe shonin ikun* and the *Kyakuhai moki*, Myōe generally emphasizes the valleys, as evinced by his constant criticisms of his contemporaries. At the same time, he also appeals to the fact that there were evil monks during the time of Śākyamuni.

Thus, although he idealized the time of the founder to an extraordinary degree, it was necessary for Myōe to locate imperfection in the near-perfect realm that he might relativize his own time and leave the door open for the possibility that those such as himself might extricate themselves from what was for him a situation brought about more by human failure than by cosmic necessity.

Perhaps the clearest expression for the perplexing character of historical time is to be found in Myōe's yearnings for India. There was no reason to think that the logic of *mappō* unfolded any differently in India as compared to Japan, and indeed, if Myōe had actually been successful in making his journey to that land, he would have arrived just in time to witness the Muslim invasions and the destruction of Buddhist culture. But if he could not reverse history itself, at least he could make a journey to the historical home of the Buddha, where he would make "a pilgrimage to the five holy sites in India, traveling to [his] heart's content and paying homage to the Tathāgata." The five holy sites were for Myōe the historical remains of Śākyamuni; if he could not go back in time, he could at least go to that historical land and come into physical contact with his Buddhist origins. The mind could encounter the past through texts, but with this alone the body would be left behind. If he could just gain a glimpse into the past with his own eyes, then there would at least be some material link. Such an encounter would be so moving, he thought, that the various practices

including the precepts would follow spontaneously, and he "would have had no need for study or practice."

What kept him from going to India was an oracle delivered to him by the Kasuga deity, the *suijaku* (flowing traces) for the *honji* (main deity), Śākyamuni. Thus, in Myōe's eyes, it was Śākyamuni himself who had restrained him from going. I return to a discussion of this oracle below, as it involves other functions of time.

As stated above, Myōe turned to praxis as the means to recover the past, above all the precepts. This would enable him to bring the past to life in the present through its physical embodiment. Again, the body would be brought into contact with the past, if only vicariously. Of the various categories of precepts, the Dharmaguptaka precepts were the most concrete and detailed, and for this reason Myōe put a great deal of emphasis on them:

> One should respect the essentials of the 250 precepts. One should act in accordance with these standards. If one takes the 250 precepts as the fundamental framework and patterns one's entire behavior after it, then one will be endowed with boundless dignity appropriate to each occasion and time.[23]

Myōe is sometimes distinguished from his Pure Land contemporary Hōnen on the grounds that, while Myōe sought to revive the precepts, Hōnen abandoned them. It is too simplistic, however, to distinguish the two on this basis alone. Hōnen was also regarded as a monk who led a virtuous life, and he is said to have died wearing the surplice of the Tendai precepts for perfect and immediate awakening (Jpn. *endonkai*) established by Saichō.[24] The difference between the two lies not so much in whether they observed the precepts but in their manner of following the precepts. For Hōnen, who entrusted himself to the other-power of Amida, the ability to follow the precepts came not from a human source but from the cosmic power of Amida. For Myōe, who sought to follow the precepts by emulating his master Śākyamuni, it was his own effort applied in the arena of human history that would enable him to encounter the Buddha. His statement "I come from among those who maintain the precepts" was an affirmation of historical time in which the Myōe laid claim to the idea that Śākyamuni was being reincarnated body and mind through Myōe in Kamakura Japan.

Yet historical time by itself did not provide a sufficient stage for the enactment of the precepts. Although Myōe may have relativized the character of *mappō* by pointing out that there were corrupt monks even in the time of Śākyamuni, the scale of degeneracy was so heavily weighted toward medieval Japan that Myōe still needed to invoke the cosmic power of buddhas and bodhisattvas to fuel his monastic revival. The precepts were not merely human rules and regulations but were the very conduits for the cosmic deities to empower monks on the stage of history:

> Although we are but temporary manifestations of the five aggregates, that we are able to realize the wondrous fruit of the four wisdoms and three bodies means we are like things made of cypress. We should think of ourselves as pieces of cypress being fashioned into buddhas by those skillful artisans, the various buddhas, bodhisattvas, and spiritual guides. Their first act [in this capacity] is to bestow us with the ten major and forty-eight minor bodhisattva precepts.[25]

Myōe may not have relied solely on "other-power" as Hōnen did, but whatever "self-power" he employed required the support of cosmic other-power. Thus, he employed a kind of modified historical time in which cosmic beings entered the historical breach of medieval Japan to counteract the virtually cosmic inertia of *mappō.* The various ways in which Myōe looked to cosmic support becomes more evident as we delve into the manner in which he invoked the discourse of cosmic time.

Cosmic time

This is not to say that Myōe did not invoke the cosmic power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, for he called upon their power frequently and with passion. Cosmic time is vastly greater in scale than historical time, where bodhisattvas engage in practices on the scale of millions of years. While it may take eons to perfect religious practices, these same beings could also traverse eons of time instantaneously to save beings anywhere and anytime, going into the past as well as the future. From the perspective of cosmic time, historical time is relativized in both quantity and quality. Not only is historical time reduced to but a brief span in a much longer and larger temporality, but from within cosmic time history becomes accessible from numerous points within the cosmic order. In this sense, cosmic time exists in a vertical rather than horizontal relation to history.[26] If the prospect of going back in historical time presented an obstacle, and the practice of the Dharmaguptaka precepts made an encounter with the Buddha only possible in a vicarious sense, cosmic time held the promise of moving freely into the past.

Myōe used a wide range of means to bring the narrative of this cosmic time to life, but the precepts provided the necessary point of departure. Whereas ordination according to the Dharmaguptaka precepts initiated one into the *saṅgha* of historical time, ordination according to the bodhisattva precepts made one a member of the cosmic *saṅgha*: "Due to the bodhisattva-precepts, [we] take refuge in the bodhisattva *saṅgha*."[27]

This, however, created a new problem: what did it mean to have dual membership in the two *saṅghas*? Ideologically, Myōe resolved this by relating the theory of the three buddha-bodies to the threefold pure precepts of the *Fanwang jing*:

> In order to fulfill the precept of embracing all rules of conduct, [one must] attain the *dharmakāya*, the dharma-body. In order to fulfill the precept of embracing all good dharmas, [one must] attain the *saṃbhogakāya*, the body of beatitude. In order to fulfill the precept of embracing all sentient beings, [one must] attain the *nirmaṇakāya*, the transformation-body. These three [precepts] are the correct causes of [attaining] the three bodies.[28]

Putting this into practice, however, was an entirely different matter. On the one hand, Myōe's sense of fidelity to the Dharmaguptaka precepts led him to follow a strict moral code:

> The third precept [against sexual activity] should be maintained even at the cost of one's life. Due to various ailments, one is liable to be inconsistent with regard to the precept against taking medications for more than seven consecutive days. One should steadfastly maintain this vow regardless of illness or any other condition.[29]

On the other hand, the inclusive spirit of the bodhisattva precepts meant that Myōe would also need to be magnanimous. Once one was ordained into the bodhisattva *saṅgha*, no evil could obstruct the working of the bodhisattva vows, for at the heart of the bodhisattva precepts was the vow to save all beings:

> If the mind of taking refuge in the three treasures is profound, but it is difficult to abandon the excess of evil karma, then [one may continue] to create evil and enter into hell. Although [this occurs], one is still the disciple of the Buddha. It is like the fact that a good outsider is not [one's] child due to [the different] parentage, but a bad child is [still] one's true child. Although one transgresses the precepts and is unrepentant, one is still superior to [the followers of] the various heretical paths. This is the meaning of [the statement that], although one has transgressed, one is still called a bodhisattva; although one has not transgressed, one is still called a heretic.[30]

Even when precepts appeared to have been transgressed, they were not really violated:

> Within this the expectant mind is the substance of the bodhisattva precepts. . . . These precepts are flexible and easy to maintain. Those who do not uphold the *uposatha* are called those who uphold the *uposatha* and those who do not maintain the precepts are called those who maintain the precepts; this is what is called flexible.[31]

Such an interpretation of the bodhisattva precepts indicates the influence of Myōe's Shingon background in the *sanmaya* precepts and shares some similarities with Annen's Tendai interpretation of the *sanmaya* precepts, which was also influenced by Shingon esotericism.[32] Just as Annen has been criticized for having established the ideological basis for a significant number of Tendai monks to legitimize their own corruption, there are also potential pitfalls in Myōe's understanding.

The gap between the Dharmaguptaka precepts and the bodhisattva precepts posed a difficult challenge for Myōe, especially in the area of sexuality. Before we turn to this problem, however, there is another, more immediate problem concerning cosmic time that requires our attention, again related to the problem of embodiment.

Ordination into the bodhisattva *saṅgha* by means of the bodhisattva precepts provided an important point of departure, but by itself this failed to bring Myōe any closer to the golden age of Śākyamuni because it did not bring with it the supernatural powers of the buddhas and bodhisattvas that made it possible to traverse freely in cosmic time. Although monks such as Annen argued that ordination in fact did grant such powers, it would be difficult to demonstrate this in any concrete sense. In order to make this transition from the textual narrative of cosmic time to empirical reality, another function of time would be required.

Vision time

For Myōe, who was steeped in Shingon ritual, meditative visualization was a staple of praxis, and he recorded numerous visions that describe his journeys into the Mahāyāna cosmos. These journeys included encounters with the Buddha Vairocana and ascents to Tuṣita Heaven, the abode of the future Buddha Maitreya.[33] He spent years in solitary practice pursuing these visions, and he attributed much of his religious insight to an encounter with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī:

> I vowed to attain the same realization as the Great Sage [Mañjuśrī], resolved to live in the mountains or near the sea, secluded myself in the mountains with but a few holy scriptures, and single-mindedly prayed to the Great Sage Mañjuśrī, whereupon he manifested himself [in a vision]. . . . I saw Mañjuśrī right there, and I prayed to him. . . . The sky was filled with limitless radiance. The Great Sage [Mañjuśrī] manifested himself in the midst of the luminosity. My joy was incalculable. That I am able to lecture to you now is due to that event.[34]

With respect to the precepts, the most important vision involved the appearance of Tuṣita Heaven in an episode that occurred during meditation on the seventh day of the eighth month of 1220:

> During my early evening meditation, I prayed for the extinction of sins and received the *kaitai* [basis of the precepts]. I vowed to administer the precepts to everyone if I received an auspicious sign.
>
> My body and mind became quiescent in the midst of *samādhi* as had happened in the sixth month. There was a pole made of lapis lazuli hanging from the sky, and I think it was hollow like a tube. I grabbed the end, and someone pulled me up. I maintained my hold and seemed to have reached Tuṣita Heaven. . . .
>
> I rolled and moved to another place. I was waiting for a voice, and someone said, "All the Buddhas have entered. You have now attained purity." Following this my body was enlarged. I was adorned by a decoration made of the Seven Jewels hanging about two yards above. I emerged from my meditation.
>
> Before this, however, I exited the gate of True Wisdom and traversed the Fifty-two Stages. The mind which arises at the stages of Faith is Mañjuśrī [himself]. The Wisdom of the Buddha is divided into ten levels, [all of] which manifest the wisdom of emptiness. The principles [of enlightenment] and the phenomena [of existence] are contained within these Ten Abiding Stages [numbers eleven to twenty] which exhaust all dharmas. Thus the text states, "The initial aspiration of the Tathāgatas of the ten directions [is based in] Mañjuśrī's power to enlighten." This is because the fruit of Buddhahood of the Ten Abiding Stages is borne forth from Mañjuśrī's Great Wisdom. The production of the fruit of the Abiding [Stages] through True Wisdom signifies the production of the fruit of Buddhahood through [the power] of Mañjuśrī. The arisal of a portion of the initial [stage] of Abiding in the stage of Faith means that Mañjuśrī becomes the disciple of the fruit of Buddhahood. In other words, this is the mutual correspondence of cause and effect. The next ten stages of Practice [numbers twenty-one to thirty] are replete with the Great Practice of Samantabhadra. The [next] ten stages of Merit-Transference [numbers thirty-one to forty] [consist] of the harmonious union of principle and transcendental wisdom. From this arises the Ten Stages of Bhumi in which there is no [need to attain] wisdom regarding principle, and the seamless conformity [of wisdom and principle] is realized. It is the fruit of Buddhahood which gives rise to this [realization]. When the meaning of this is suddenly grasped in the midst of *samādhi*, cause and effect are simultaneous. This should be contemplated. It is difficult to express in words.[35]

The two most important elements of this lengthy account are, first, that Myōe received the precepts, attained the body of purity, and experienced the buddhas enter into him, and, second, that he completed the path of Buddhist practice according to the fifty-two stages of bodhisattvahood. In

vision time, cosmic time is collapsed to the point where eons are experienced in an instant. In this case, the ten stages of faith became simultaneous with the final stages: "When the meaning of this is suddenly grasped in the midst of *samādhi*, cause and effect are simultaneous."

The power of visions enabled Myōe to traverse time in an instant, perfect the practice of the precepts, complete the bodhisattva stages, and virtually attain buddhahood. Unfortunately, visions are fleeting, and Myōe would have to return to the world of historical time. A return to historical time did not necessarily mean that the effects of religious experience were entirely lost (as can be seen from the vision of Mañjuśrī). In fact, it might be argued that Myōe had effectively transformed his world through his various practices so that historical time was limited to but a small part of his overall time, but the fact that Myōe yearned for India and longed for solitary practice until the end of his life suggests the possibility that the results of his forays into vision time were less than fully satisfying.

Oneiric time

Myōe is well known for his *Yume no ki*, a chronicle of his dreams maintained over thirty-five years. The word *yume*, which is usually translated as "dream," actually spans two senses in the Classical Japanese of the medieval period and refers to both dreams and waking visions. Although the Sino-Japanese character for *yume* in modern Japanese may be used to designate both dreams seen during sleep and daydreams, as in the compound *hakujitsumu*, this differs from the dual connotation of *yume* in the Kamakura Period. In medieval times, what we would distinguish variously as meditative visualizations, vision-like dreams, and dreams in a more conventional sense were blended together in the continuum of *yume*.

Here I employ the relative distinction used today between vision and dreams, and thus between vision time and oneiric time. Whereas meditative visions are constructed around mythical figures and topos, dreams are often inscribed as a passive landscape of contents spilling over from ordinary waking consciousness, memories, and various other sources, including residues of cultivated visions. This allows historical time to blend together with cosmic time within oneiric time in a way that meditative visualizations are not designed to do. As they are inscribed in the literary topos, dreams may be just as constructed as meditative visualizations. However, dreams allow whoever inscribes them to go outside of the boundaries of prescribed orthopraxy as well as including elements of the latter. Oneiric time allows for the manipulation of various temporal components to meet the strategic needs of particular circumstances in ways that vision time may not. The significance of this definition of oneiric time is twofold: first, historical time may be realized in oneiric time; second, historical time and cosmic time may be synthesized in oneiric time.

Evidence for the first possibility can be found in the account of a dream where Myōe was able to go to the historical land of Śākyamuni:

> In a dream seen on the night of the last day of the seventh month of 1230, I stood two boards on end, each several tens of yards high and about a foot wide. As I climbed up these boards, I felt as though I were on my way to India. Someone was helping me from above. There were two women below who were pushing me up. I was able to complete the climb without disturbance. I thought to myself that I had just finished the climb which I had been unable to make in years past. I felt that I had completed my task.[36]

In another dream, he was able to meet one of Śākyamuni's disciples, Mahākāśyapa, although he was unable to meet the Buddha himself:

> On the seventh day of the eighth month of the same year [1220], I arose from my morning meditation and lay down to rest, whereupon I saw the following dream: There was a sage, and I think this was Mahākāśyapa. . . . He went and returned. This was a dream I saw while praying for the full precepts.[37]

It is unclear whether Myōe traveled to the golden age of Śākyamuni to meet Mahākāśyapa or whether the latter came to visit Myōe, but in either case the historical gap between past and present was bridged in the discourse of oneiric time.

Second, Myōe had several dreams with sexual imagery. The problem of sexuality mentioned above highlights the tension between cosmic and historical time because sexuality is strictly forbidden for monks in the historical *saṅgha* but is embraced in the cosmic bodhisattva *saṅgha*, especially that of Myōe's Shingon esotericism. In the following dream, he experienced historical time while acting within the cosmic framework of the bodhisattva precepts; he kept the precepts in the one while transcending them in the other.

> In a dream seen on the night of the twenty-fourth day [of the twelfth month], a great hail appeared. There was a noblewoman inside. She had a plump face and was exceptionally fat. She was wearing a blue multi-layered kimono, and I met her at the back door. I thought, "Her features and appearance are in accord with the Great Master Fazang's commentary on the scriptures." This woman's appearance was truly in conformity [with the teachings]. Her every aspect revealed the Dharma. My encounter with her was also a manifestation of the Dharma. I spent the night, and we engaged in sexual intercourse. Everyone said that the ceremonial act would certainly

become a cause of enlightenment. We embraced each other. There was deep feeling for each other.

Note: I feel that this ceremonial act conformed to the Great Master Fazang's commentary.[38]

From such examples it can be seen that oneiric time is one of the most flexible forms of time, in which great distances and periods of time can be traversed, and the world of historical time and cosmic time can be bridged. Just as in the case of vision time, however, the experiences of oneiric time are fleeting, uncertain, and, in comparison to vision time, less subject to conscious control. Furthermore, although the discourse of dreams can often convey a more embodied sense than dry doctrines, they are also usually less than fully embodied: upon awakening the dreamer knows she has been in a dream – not quite real. Intense dreams, however, can sometimes be so vivid that they seem more real than ordinary waking consciousness.

Archeological time

The last function of time to be examined here is archeological time, the prime example of which is the time of relic worship, specifically the bone remains (Skt. *śarīra*, Jpn. *shari*) of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. It is similar to historical time insofar as it is in principle publicly observable, is predominantly discursive, and is grounded in the physical world. The main difference between the two lies in the direction in which time moves.

At one level, historical time and archeological time both move simultaneously in two directions, from past to future, and future to past. In reading the sūtras, Myōe sought to move imaginatively into the past, as he did in worshipping the relics of the Buddha. Moreover, both the sūtras and the relics are artifacts that transmit the past into the present.[39] However, from the perspective of the precepts, in which physical embodiment is central, opposite aspects of these two forms of time are emphasized. In the case of the sūtras, the mind enters imaginatively into the past, but the body is left behind, whereas in the case of the relics, the artifacts of the past stimulate the imagination in the present. Conversely, while the sūtras are transmitted from past to present as intellectual artifacts, the body enters the past through the presence of the relics.

Myōe devoted an entire work to the Buddha's relics, the *Shari koshiki* (Lectures on the Relics of the Buddha),[40] and as Sueki notes, he virtually equated the presence of the relics with that of the Buddha himself.[41] The key role played by the relics in relation to the precepts is illustrated by an episode in which Myōe received some relics of Śākyamuni from Jōkei, who told him that they had originally been brought to Japan by the Vinaya master Ganjin.[42] From the perspective of the precepts, even a tiny amount

of bone dust is as valuable as the Vinaya texts themselves, since it is the body of the Buddha that transmits the reality of the precepts.

Other artifacts such as calligraphy were used in a similar manner. Calligraphy samples by accomplished masters were placed in altars and worshipped as if their creators were present. In both cases the artifacts served as what Faure calls substitute bodies.[43] The logic differs somewhat in the two cases, because the attainment of the master is supposed to be discernible in the calligraphy itself, whereas relics are "merely" material remains. Nevertheless, relics are often invested with a great deal of power. What is thought to be the actual remains of the Buddha trumps the writing sample of a later, lesser master. In this sense, there is a similarity between relic worship and the kind of pilgrimage Myōe had hoped to go on, in which confirmation of historical events and personages is gained through material, empirical evidence.

Neither a calligraphy sample nor a pinch of powdered bone could truly substitute for a living teacher, of course, and the approach to the golden age of Śākyamuni through archeological time was less than ideal. At the same time, relics could be more easily controlled than a living human being, and ownership of the relics could confer tremendous institutional power.

As can be seen from the foregoing examination, the discourse of time functioned in many different ways for Myōe, and he used time in various ways in relation to the precepts as he sought to extricate himself from the predicament of *mappō*, to bridge the gap between the discombobulated time of *mappō* and the time of the embodied buddha. To this end, each function of time presented particular advantages and disadvantages, soteriological potential and ideological ambiguity. Perhaps nowhere were these ambiguities more involved than in the oracle of the Kasuga Deity, to which we now turn in the examination of *mappō*, time, and the precepts as found in Myōe.

The oracle of the Kasuga Deity

It was noted above that Myōe abandoned his plans to go to India at the behest of the deity enshrined at Kasuga in Nara,[44] and so, unlike Eisai, Shunjo, and others of his time, he did not actually go outside of Japan to look for a solution to the problem of *mappō*. He was also unlike his Pure Land counterpart Hōnen and the later Nichiren, who, though remaining in Japan, rejected the traditions they first studied. Although Myōe was extremely critical of his contemporaries in Japan, it can be said in a sense that he never really left his own family, as he maintained throughout his life his affiliation with the Kegon and Shingon orders into which he had been initiated by his uncle Jogaku. This close relationship between clan and religious affiliation did not end there. In the case of Myōe, perhaps the strongest familial tie to a religious institution was to be found not in a Buddhist temple but in the shrine of a *kami*, the Kasuga Jinja.

As explained above, the Kasuga Deity was the *suijaku* (manifestation) of the *honji* (main deity), who in this case was the Buddha Śākyamuni. Thus, when the deity delivered an oracle to Myōe, he understood it to be coming from the Buddha himself, and the voice of authority of his spiritual father was strong enough to override his powerful desire to go to India. In a sense, it might be said that of all the precepts he obeyed, this was the greatest of all, coming as it did from Śākyamuni himself: "Do not go to India."

On the one hand, this could be explained in the terms of traditional Buddhist doctrine as an injunction not to look for the Buddha externally. Myōe had himself written that the Buddha was not to be found apart from the mind:

> Like the mind, so also the Buddha;
> Like the Buddha, all sentient beings.
> The mind, the Buddha, and all sentient beings,
> There is no difference among these three.[45]

On the other hand, there are ramifications stemming from the oracle that may be overlooked in turning to doctrine for an explanation, for the voice of the Buddha may not have been the only voice present in the injunction of the oracle.

Accounts of the oracle can be found in the *Himitsu kanjin cho* (*Secret Book of Shrine Pledges*), a work by Myōe chronicling the founding of a shrine that he built in Kishu where he was engaged in intensive practice, the *Kasuga Myojin takusen ki* (Chronicle of the Oracle of the Kasuga Deity) by Myōe's closest disciple Kikai, as well as later hagiographical sources.[46]

According to these accounts, Myōe went to pray for an oracle concerning his desire to go to India in the beginning of 1203. There were a number of people present, and his cousin, the wife of his uncle Yuasa Munemitsu, had been preparing for this occasion by fasting for seven days. She was about the same age as Myōe, who was thirty at the time. At one point she suddenly entered a trance and declared that she was the Kasuga Deity who had come to tell Myōe not to go to India. In order to receive further confirmation, the prayers continued until three days later, when she entered a trance once again:

> When she spoke a thick odor accompanied her breath, and it covered everything, reaching a distance of more than four hundred yards.
>
> The Kasuga Deity spoke to Myōe through her and said, "I love you as I would my own dear child. But it is to be regretted that you have been neglecting your studies of late, and I wish that you would pay more attention to the holy scriptures. . . . Many suffering beings are waiting for you, so do not isolate yourself but go live near the imperial palace. I also feel a deep sympathy for Gedatsubo

> Jokei, but unfortunately, he has gone into seclusion in Kasagi. Please relate my feelings to him. You are under the protection of various deities, but the Sumiyoshi Deity and myself are your constant guards, and I am like your father. You are assured of being born in the Tuṣita Heaven in your next life, but you should serve as a teacher for humans while you are in this world. Your desire to go to India is a great source of concern for me. . . . You should come to the Kasuga Shrine and live in Nara. . . .
>
> After the deity had finished speaking, he lifted Myōe up by his hands and cradled him. Tears filled his eyes as he looked into Myōe's face with tender affection. He said, "Do not go against my word no matter what happens."[47]

According to Myōe's account in the *Himitsu kanjin cho*, the Kasuga Deity exuded a sublime sweet flavor on its hands, feet, and mouth, and the people present licked this off her body and became enraptured. There is still more to this account, but these are the main points: Myōe's intimacy with the deity, the relation of both Myōe and the woman of Yuasa to the Kasuga Shrine, and the intersection of different times in the oracle.

Myōe was descended on his mother's side from the Yuasa clan, which identified itself as a branch of the Fujiwara. As Matsumoto Hochio notes, this genealogical identification may have been contrived for political purposes, a common practice in medieval Japan.[48] Regardless of the origin of this affiliation, it had led both Myōe and his aunt to form close ties with the Kasuga Jinja, the clan shrine of the Fujiwara, of which Jōkei was also a descendent. In short, the experience of the oracle was altogether a family affair, and the voice that had called to Myōe to remain in Japan might just as well be understood to have originated from blood ties as it did from a karmic bond with the Buddha. In the relationship between the clan deity of the Kasuga shrine and the Buddha Śākyamuni, it is not clear which was the essence and which the flowing trace. Was the Buddha the real *honji* or was it the *kami*? Was the *kami* the *suijaku* or was it the Buddha? As Royall Tyler points out, "Myōe Shonin became the first spiritual leader to urge Kasuga devotion upon people outside of the Fujiwara clan. In his activity, . . . one may see the trend toward popularization that is . . . apparently responsible for the development of the Kasuga *ko*, or devotional 'confraternities,' which were common in Yamato and nearby areas."[49] Was this a case in which the message of the Buddha was being disseminated through the *kami*, or the interests of the *kami* being propagated through the Buddhist priest?

Thus, the voice of the Kasuga Deity might be understood to be the bond of family ties calling out to Myōe as much as the transcendent voice of Buddhist interiority, and the clearly sexual overtones of the oracle as the intimacy between Myōe and the woman of Yuasa rather than between the disciple of the Buddha and his beloved master. What might seem like an

incestuous and therefore taboo relation was not regarded as such in medieval Japan, as it was common for cousins to marry. In this realm Myōe was beholden not to the precepts that forbade sexual relations but to the human bonds of love. He was still very much at home (Jpn. *zaike*) and had not left his family (Jpn. *shukke*) at all.

There are other ways in which this made itself apparent. When Myōe left Jingoji in 1195 to engage in a period of solitary practice, he went to Kishū, which was far from the capital and the distractions of institutional politics. At the same time, it was also the area of his birth, and he was going home to be among family. On the one hand, records indicate that he spent his years there in intensive practice under austere conditions, rigorously upholding the precepts; on the other, he enjoyed the patronage and protection of his relatives. While he observed the precept against eating more than once a day, he did not have to beg or worry about his next meal, because his relatives prepared bundles of food for him once every five days.[50] He did not transgress the precepts as long as he stayed out of their homes and did not re-establish close familial ties. But there was always that danger, along with the possibility that clan politics could influence his role as a priest.

Many different times intersect in the oracle of Kasuga. The experience of the oracle is at once cosmic, visionary, oneiric, and historical. The cosmic dimension lies in the presence of Śākyamuni, who traverses millennia in an instant to enter Kamakura Japan. It is visionary insofar as Myōe is awake and engages in prayer in order to receive an oracle. But it is also dream-like due to the fact that the actual contents of the oracle were beyond conscious control. It is historical, not only because the deity invokes the historical sphere by requesting that Myōe not go to India, but also because it is semi-public in character and thus subject to historiographic verification. The intersection of so many different time zones makes it difficult to untangle the various strands that are involved, but it is precisely these multiple intersections that make it possible to move in so many directions and negotiate the "appropriate" path. This oracle holds many implications for historical time as well as cosmic time and their relation to the precepts in Myōe, and the foregoing discussion has uncovered just a few of them.

Conclusion

At first glance, the problem of ecclesiastical decline and social decay during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Japan, and the attempt of monks like Myōe to institute a revival of monastic observance, appears to be a fairly straightforward historical issue – a historical solution for a historical problem. Yet the scope and magnitude of *mappō* required Myōe to flex, bend, and interrupt historical time with the discourses of modified, cosmic, visionary, oneiric, and archeological time in his attempts to counteract the negative effects of *mappō*. By employing these non-ordinary conceptions, he sought

to bridge the *eidos* of enlightenment with the *soma* of praxis. Whether or to what extent he may have succeeded, the degree to which social and political concerns may have dovetailed or interfered with his attempts – these are questions that this chapter only begins to explore. Of course, one would have to clarify from what standpoint in time one posed these questions in order to answer them more fully. What kind of time does the historian of religion live in? What effect does this have on the analysis of the discourse of medieval Japanese time? A detailed treatment of these questions will have to await another opportunity, but suffice it to say that time, whose character we so often take for granted, shows itself to be the most extraordinary of entities that pervades the ordinary world of discourse in medieval Japan.

Notes

This chapter is an adaptation from: Mark Ty Unno, "As Appropriate: Myōe Kōben and the Problem of the Vinaya in Early Kamakura Buddhism," PhD Dissertation, Stanford University, 1994, pp. 52–66. The abbreviation "MSS" is used for references to: *Myōe Shōnin shiryō*, vols 1, 2, and 3, Kozanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsa dan, ed., Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1971, 1978, 1987.

1 Michele Marra, "The Development of *Mappō* Thought in Japan" I, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 15/1 (Spring 1988), p. 31.
2 Wajima Yoshio, *Eizon, Ninshō–Jimbutsu sosho 30*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1978, p. 20.
3 Rasmus, "The Sayings of Myōe Shonin of Togano-o," *Eastern Buddhist*, 15/1 (Spring 1982), p. 91.
4 Translation taken from Hayao Kawai, *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams*, Venice, CA: Lapis Press, 1992, p. 47.
5 Cited in Sueki Fumihiko, "Myōe no Shaka shinko," in *Nihon bungaku to Bukkyō* 3, Imano Susumu, Satake Akihiro, and Ueda Shizuteru, eds, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994, p. 226. For an explanation of the title, see ibid., p. 245.
6 These plans are recorded in numerous places. For a detailed discussion of these plans, see George J. Tanabe Jr, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992, pp. 66–73.
7 Rasmus, p. 94.
8 This point is made by Ishida Mizumaro in his *Nihon Bukkyō shisō kenkyu 2: Kairitsu no kenkyu (ge)*, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1986, p. 282.
9 Rasmus, p. 97.
10 Ibid., p. 101.
11 Ibid., pp. 100–101.
12 This does not mean that the other two learnings of meditation and wisdom were any less important. However, the precepts were both the foundation for the other two and their most concrete expression in daily life.
13 Toganoo, *Sekkai nikki*, MSS, 3: 639.
14 *Yume no ki*. Cited in Tsuchihashi, *Kairitsu no kenkyū*, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshodo, 1980, p. 261.
15 *Kambun gyojo*, MSS, 1: 144.
16 See Mark Unno, "Translated Texts in Contexts," in his "As Appropriate," esp. pp. 68–84.

17 *Kozanji engi ryakugaki*, MSS, 1: 682.
18 Listed in Murakami Sodō, *Toganoo-zan Kozanji Myoe Shonin*, Kyoto: Toganoo Kozanji, 1937, p. 314.
19 *Myoe shonin ikun*, MSS, 3: 670.
20 Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 178.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., n. 4.
23 *Kyakuhai mōki*, KKB: pp. 115–116.
24 Harper Havelock Ellis and Ryugaku Ishizuka, trs, *Hōnen the Buddhist Saint – His Life and Teaching by Shunjo Hoin*, Kyoto: Chionin, 1925, p. 637.
25 *Toganoo sekkai nikki*, MSS, 3: 637.
26 I am indebted to Carl Bielefeldt for pointing out the vertical character of the relationship between historical and cosmic time.
27 *Toganoo Sekkai nikki*, MSS, 3: 632.
28 Ibid., 3: 639.
29 *Kyakuhai mōki, Kamakura kyu Bukkyo – Nihon shiso taikei 15*, Kamata Shigeo and Tanaka Hisao, eds, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971, p. 111.
30 *Toganoo Sekkai nikki*, MSS, 3: 632.
31 Ibid., 3: 635.
32 See Unno, "As Appropriate," p. 31.
33 See Kawai, pp. 183–184, and 170.
34 Accounts of this vision are also recorded in the *Yume no ki* and the *Denki.* The account in the *Yume no ki* was recorded by Myōe and states that he had the vision while practicing the meditation of no thought. *Yume no ki*, MSS, 2: 115. For a translation of both accounts, see Kawai, p. 80.
35 Translation from Kawai, pp. 187–188.
36 Translation from ibid., p. 197.
37 Tsuchihashi, p. 261.
38 Translation from Kawai, pp. 148–149.
39 See Tanabe, pp. 40 and 42.
40 Listed in Murakami, *Toganoo-zan Kozanji Myoe Shonin*, p. 314.
41 Sueki, "Myōe no Shaka shinko," in *Nihon bungaku to Bukkyō* 3, Imano Susumu et al., eds, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994, pp. 230–233.
42 Cited in Tanabe, p. 69.
43 Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 170.
44 For a detailed historical study of the Kasuga cult, see Allan Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods – A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History*, Berkeley: University of California, 1992.
45 *Kegon yuishingi*, in *Myōe shōnin hen–Kōsō meicho zenshū 9*, Yamamoto Isao, ed., Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1930, p. 95.
46 Kawai has summarized the main points in Kawai, pp. 102–104.
47 MSS, 1: 237–243; translation from Kawai, pp. 102–103.
48 Matsumoto Hochio, *Yuasatō to Myōe*, Wakayama: Uji Shoten, 1979, pp. 28–29.
49 Royall Tyler, *The Miracles of the Kasuga Deity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 58.
50 Matsumoto, p. 144.

8

SWORDS, WORDS, AND DEFORMITY

On Myōe's eccentricity

Ryūichi Abé

An eminent Kamakura Buddhist figure, Myōe Kōben (1173–1232) lived a colorful life adorned with numerous anecdotes that describe his strange and eccentric behaviors. For example, when he was a young novice, he went to a cemetery ground alone at night and tried to offer himself to hungry wolves. When he was twenty-six years old, he had his disciple deliver a greeting letter addressed to a coastal island that he visited fondly several times to perform meditation rituals. Four years later, Myōe tirelessly attempted to make a pilgrimage to India – despite the fact that no Japanese figures preceding his time succeeded in such an expedition. Myōe gave up his plan only when the wife of a major patron was possessed by the *kami* Kasuga, who through her mouth admonished him to stop his temerarious travel attempt.[1] For thirty-five years, from the time he was fully ordained until a few years before his death, Myōe kept his "Dream Diary," in which he recorded the visions he had acquired in his dreams and also during his meditation practices.[2]

Among these behaviors Myōe's cutting off of his right ear on the peak of Shiragami in Kii Province in 1196, when he was twenty-four years old, stands out as the most radical act.[3] In this chapter I strive to understand the religious meaning of this extremity committed by Myōe, by placing it, first, in the context of his scriptural/doctrinal studies and, second, against the cultural backdrop of early Kamakura society.

Myōe's parents died in 1180, when he was only eight years old. In the following year, he was sent to Takaosanji, an ancient mountain temple in the northwest of Kyoto. Jōgaku (d. 1226), a senior priest at the temple, who was Myōe's deceased mother's brother, took Myōe as his novice disciple.[4] Myōe's biographers tell that since the beginning of his stay at Takaosanji, he devoted himself deeply to the Buddhist path, inspired by the imagination that his father was Śākyamuni Buddha, and his mother the female

Bodhisattva Buddhalocanā, or Butsugen Busumo in Japanese ("Eye of the Buddha, Mother of All Buddhas").[5] Following his precept ordination into the priesthood at Kaidain'in, Tōdaiji, at age sixteen, Myōe began his formal Buddhist training. When Myōe was eighteen, Jōgaku taught him the *Jūhachidō*, the essential Esoteric Buddhist meditative ritual. Only a year later, in 1191, the same teacher permitted Myōe to study the *Kongōkai yugahō*, an advanced ritual meditation on the Diamond Realm *maṇḍala* and its divinities described in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. Myōe must have progressed rapidly in his study of Esotericism. In 1193, when he was twenty-one years old, Myōe was given an official dharma transmission from Rishōbō Kōzen (1121–1203) of Kajūji, an eminent Shingon master, who was Jōgaku's teacher. Kōzen's recognition of Myōe as his dharma heir marked the completion of Myōe's training in the Shingon school, a high honor reserved only for advanced students of Kegon philosophy.[6]

Concurrently with his study of Esotericism, Myōe dedicated himself diligently in learning the Kegon School and other exoteric disciplines, in particular Hossō (Skt. Yogācāra) and Kusha (Skt. *Abidharmakośa*), as the foundation of the Kegon studies. In 1193, the year in which Myōe received Kōzen's esoteric dharma transmission, the Abbot Bengyō of the Sonshōin subtemple at Tōdaiji appointed Myōe as one of the temple's resident scholar priests to engage in the advanced Kegon doctrinal study.[7]

I

One aspect of Myōe's religious life enables us to observe the singular manner in which he devoted himself to the Buddhist path. In the *Kozanji Myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, the biography of Myōe composed by Myōe's senior disciple Kikai (1178–1252), Myōe speaks of his state of mind when he was thirteen years old:

> [I thought:] "I am already thirteen now. I am so aged that my death is drawing near. Rather than spending my life idly, without achieving anything, I should abandon my life in order to save people, or to have my body given to tigers or wolves – just like the Buddha in his former lives sacrificed himself for the sake of sentient beings." To test my resolve, carrying with me only the *Abhidharmakośa's* verse text and hiding myself from others, I went alone to the graveyard and spent a night there. Hearing a sound of something moving by me, I thought wolves were approaching me. Guided by the example of Prince Mahāsattva throwing himself before the starved tiger, I was resolved that night to allow wolves to eat me. I kept waiting, thinking about all the marvelous acts Śākyamuni Buddha practiced in his past lives. However, nothing extraordinary happened and the day broke already. With a feeling of regret and failure, I returned to my temple.[8]

It appears that the young Myōe was fascinated by what he describes in his work as *shashingyō*, a type of the bodhisattva act of giving (Skt. *dāna-pāramitā*) in which bodhisattvas sacrifice their own lives, or parts of their bodies, for saving beings. By doing so, they strive to acquire insights into selfless nonattachment in their pursuit of the dharma, and generate great compassion out of their selflessness to advance their salvific activities.[9] Kikai's biography tells that when Myōe received the full ordination at age sixteen, he told himself that abiding by the Buddha's precepts is far more important than protecting one's own life. Therefore, if he was incapable of upholding the precepts, he would do better to give up his own life as a way to help other beings. Thinking again about Prince Mahāsattva's heroic deed, Myōe went to the graveyard as before and spent a night there alone. He returned home safely again, but this time with a sense of satisfaction. He regarded the fact that no harm was done to his body as a propitious sign that he would be successful in his effort to abide by the precepts.[10] A few years later, Myōe had a chance to return to his home region in Kii Province. On his way, at a place called Fujishiro, he encountered a leper. He heard someone say that the only medicine that could cure the leper of his illness is a small portion of human flesh. He recalled another celebrated episode in the *Jātaka*, the story of King Shibi who as one of the former existences of the Buddha, saved a dove from an eagle's chase by offering the eagle his own flesh equal in weight to the dove. Myōe revisited the leper, carrying with him a sharpened dagger. However, the leper had already passed away and Myōe returned to his temple.[11]

These examples show that Myōe took as his inspiration the bodhisattva's sacrificial acts in the Buddhist scriptures as setting the standard for his own religious life. He saw no distinction or disjunction between the words of the scripture and the principles guiding his everyday deeds.

Because of his fervent devotion to the dharma, and despite the fast progress he had been making in his doctrinal studies, Myōe was not satisfied by the Buddhist teachers of his time. Myōe's formal teacher was Mongaku (1139–1203), the abbot of Takaosanji. He was renowned for his work of rebuilding Takaosanji, his fundraising for the Nara temples, and his striking a political alliance with Minamoto Yoritomo and Yoritomo's shogunate at Kamakura.[12] However, as the Tendai Abbot Jien depicted him as "excellent in practice, inferior in learning,"[13] it is unlikely that Mongaku was a master who responded to Myōe's spiritual aspiration and satisfied his intellectual appetite. Myōe studied with a number of celebrated scholar priests of his time – for example, he studied abhidharma with the priest Shōsen of Tōdaiji, Kegon with the priest Keiga of Ninnaji, and Sanskrit with the priest Son'in of Ninnaji.[14] Myōe's biographers give many examples in which Myōe had questions on the scriptural texts he studied with these teachers, questions that they failed to answer adequately. Myōe often obtained answers in his dreams, in which divinities such as the Bodhisattva Buddhalocanā, and

legendary priests like Kūkai or mysterious Indian monks appeared as Myōe's teachers and provided him with adequate instructions.[15]

Kikai tells in his biography that in 1193, when Myōe was a resident scholar priest at Sonshōin at Tōdaiji, he was chosen to be the chief lecturer at the temple's public event. However, observing the scholar-priests there quarreling over trifling matters, Myōe resigned from his post at Tōdaiji and returned to Takaosanji. In the fall of 1195, when a dispute broke out between Takaosanji and a local official over the ownership of a parcel of land, Myōe departed to Shiragami on the coast of Kii Province, aiming to establish a hermitage there where he could peacefully immerse himself in religious pursuits.[16] All these events made Myōe deplore how distanced he was, both in time and space, from the India of the living Buddha where, he believed, people naturally practiced Buddhism in the most appropriate and admirable manner.

II

In *Kyakuhaimōki*, Myōe's collected sayings compiled only three years after his death by the priest Chōen, another senior disciple, Myōe explains his thoughts that led to his departure to Shiragami:

> As I observed how famed masters today in both the exoteric and esoteric disciplines carry out their study and practice, I found many things they do questionable and deplorable. They gave no hint for me to imagine what it would be like to become genuinely endowed with faith and wisdom. Striving to reach the realm of the great enlightened ones, I thought about living in a mountain on the deserted coast. Carrying with me only the scriptural texts and my personal divinity, I secluded myself in the mountains.[17]

With a small number of young priests who accompanied him from Takaosanji, Myōe built huts on the peak of Shiragami, which soared high above the Yuasa Bay. The peaks provided its hermits a spectacular view, beyond the calm waters of the bight, of the vast Pacific Ocean – the ocean, Myōe commented often, would link him to India where Śākyamuni Buddha once walked.[18] This is how the stage was set for the act of cutting off his right ear. In the following section of Kikai's biography, Myōe ponders how it is possible to make a new beginning in his spiritual progress – how to emerge out of what he considers to be the degenerated conventions widely observed among the contemporaneous *kenmitsu* Buddhists, the mainstream Buddhists of medieval Japan whose dominant characteristics were the combined practice of Esoteric and Exoteric doctrines:

> That priests shave their heads and dress themselves in variegated robes is the Buddha's expedient means. By removing from our

> appearance what we pride most, the Tathāgata helps us destroy our arrogance and self-centeredness, and by making our body and mind free of worldly attachments, he makes us depart far and away from the realm of delusion. That is why the great teachers in the past, in their effort to single-mindedly pursue the Dharma, went so far as gouging out their eyes, and cutting off their noses, ears, arms and legs. . . . The priests of today, however, shave their heads meticulously in order to take pride in the shine of their heads, and they spend hours in making their variegated dharma robes, until they manifest desired shades of color. They are just like reckless patients who, having received medicine, indulge themselves in the pleasures that caused their illness. I thus thought of disfiguring myself as a way to remove myself from the human world, solidify my resolve, and follow the path trodden by the Tathāgatas. But if I gouge out my eye, it would make it difficult for me to study the scriptures. If I cut off my nose, I was afraid that water from my nose would taint the sacred texts. If I cut off my hand, I would not be able to make *mudrā* gestures. But then I thought: if I cut off my ear, without impairing my hearing, I would be able to deform myself. Thereupon, pledging a great vow, with my mind resolute, I sat before Tathāgata Buddhalocanā. Raising my ear, tying it to the altar's leg, holding a sword in my hand, I cut off my right ear.[19]

Kikai comments that blood splashed out and stained the image of Buddhalocanā and Myōe's ritual instruments. Kikai also reports in his biography two marvelous events that happened to Myōe in the evening of the same day when Myōe disfigured himself. In his dream Myōe saw an Indian priest visiting him, who announced: "I am in charge of recording all the sacrificial acts carried out by those bodhisattvas destined to become buddhas, the painful and difficult acts in which they give up their heads, eyes, hands and legs for saving sentient beings."[20] Having said so, the Indian priests wrote down Myōe's name and his action at the end of his note made of several sheets of large double-folded parchment.[21] Awakened by the dream, Myōe chanted the *Daśabhūmika* chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, which discusses the process of a bodhisattvas's progress, from original awakening to the final realization of buddhahood. As he concentrated himself in the chanting, he was filled with joy, feeling as if he joined the assembly in the sūtra receiving the living Buddha's teaching. Then, suddenly Myōe felt bright light above him and saw in the light the gold-hued image of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī riding on the golden lion hovering in space.[22]

It appears that there is a thread running consistently through the events surrounding Myōe's cutting off his ear, as they are narrated by Kikai. Myōe's personal divinity, Buddhalocanā is the Eye of the Buddha. She is therefore the perfect witness to Myōe's self-deformation. Buddhalocanā is also the

personification of *prajñā*, transcendental wisdom, the matrix-mother who procreates all the buddhas. In that sense, she is identical with Mañjuśrī, the male divinity who, holding the sharp sword as his attribute, symbolizes the transcendental wisdom that eradicates all delusions. The Indian priest in Myōe's dream praises Myōe as a bodhisattva who heroically carries out the bodhisattva act of giving, the first step in the six *pāramitās*. He describes Myōe as one destined to attain buddhahood, who will reach the sixth and the last perfection, the perfection of wisdom, *prajñāpāramitā*. Myōe's self-inflicted physical deformity condenses the meaning of these events in such a way that Myōe's sword now appears identical with Mañjuśrī's, the sword of wisdom that predestines Myōe's attainment of buddhahood. The ear that separated from his body/being is the tradition of medieval Japanese Buddhism he had received – the ear through which he learned the dharma in the framework of Buddhist establishment, the social and institutional conventions he now desired to leave behind.

III

Did losing his right ear indeed give Myōe freedom from the religious establishment of his time? It was not unusual in medieval Japanese society to encounter folks lacking their ears. Experts who study the legal system of medieval Japan know well that cutting off ears, together with cutting off noses, fingers, and arms, was one of the common methods of punishing criminals. Among diverse methods of dismembering, the removal of fingers and arms is typically applied to thieves and pickpockets. On the other hand, severing ears and noses was employed for punishing those who committed such crimes as fraud, tax evasion, kidnapping, arson, and treason.[23] According to *Azuma kagami*, in 1190 Minamoto Yoritomo arrested a woman who disguised herself as an imperial princess. She deserved capital punishment, but Yoritomo instead cut off her ear, slashed her face and expelled her.[24] Fujiwara Teika reports in his *Meigetsuki* that in 1226 the Shogunate's officials in Kyoto rounded up illegal gamblers in the city and cut off their noses.[25] In a Kongōbuji document dated 1275, the residents of Adegawa in Kii Province petitioned to stop the local officials from cutting off the ears and noses of the wives and children of farmers who had evaded corvée and fled to another domain.[26]

The principle behind these punishments involving the disfigurement of facial features is to demonstrate that the punished had committed crimes that go against the essential values of humanity. With the legally imposed deformation, the punished became "less than human" and lost their appropriate membership in society. They were thus called *hinin*, which literally means "non-human," which in the medieval Japanese context referred to outcasts. Having no other means to support themselves, they resided in isolated quarters outside the bounds of normal society and lived

their lives as beggars. This explains why we find lepers treated in a manner that parallels the treatment of criminals in medieval Japan. Lepers, too, were addressed and treated as *hinin*. They were considered as those who received the heavenly sentence (*tenkei*) for their inhuman deeds, according to the Confucian explanation, or suffered the divine punishment (*shinbatsu*) for the crimes they committed in their past lives, according to the Buddhist reasoning.[27]

Myōe must have been aware of all the cultural implications surrounding his new life as an ear-lacking priest. During his stay at Shiragami, Myōe sustained his life by the act of begging in nearby villages.[28] It is therefore not surprising that in many of his works Myōe calls himself "*hinin*." In 1211, for example, on a copy of an exegesis on the *Awakening of Faith* given to the nun Jōshin, he signed "the *hinin* Kōben of the Kegon School."[29] In a manual dated 1220 on *bukkō hokkaikan*, a meditative exercise Myōe himself invented, he signed himself "the *hinin* Koben, the practitioner of the meditation of the Buddha's light."[30] Other examples of Myōe's self-address that interest us here include the following: "The first and foremost *hinin* of this mountain temple," "the ear-severed Dharma master," "the *hinin* of the Kegon School," "the *hinin*-beggar of the Shingon School," "the beggar of the Kii mountains, the latter day disciple of the Diamond Vehicle," "the crazed child of the late Tathāgata," "the foremost beggar of the nation of Japan, the *hinin*-dharma master, who hereby pledges never to occupy the court office of the Priest Generals."[31]

If Myōe recognized himself as a *hinin*, what was his crime? For what sin was he punished, or did he punish himself? As demonstrated by recent research by Akasaka Norio, Kuroda Hideo, Ishii Susumu, and other historians, the term *tsumi*, which translates into both "crime" and "sin" in English, is etymologically synonymous with *kegare*, pollution.[32] In classical Japanese, the concept that corresponds to *tsumi* is first of all *harae* – that is, to wipe away *kegare*. Only secondarily do we identify as *harae*'s derivative *batsu* (punishment), an idea formed since the establishment of the legal system during the late seventh and eighth centuries, under a heavy Chinese influence. The celebrated episode from *Kojiki*, the ancient anthology of Japanese myths, of the violent *kami* Susanoo's banishment from his sister Amaterasu's heavenly realm illustrates the point. For Susanoo's sacrilegious acts that destroyed the divine rice fields, offerings to gods in the palace, and Amaterasu's weaving hall, the heavenly gods arrested Susanoo and first removed his nails from his fingers. Then they expelled him from Takamagahara into the lower realm.[33] The removal of the *kegare*, the disturbance of the cosmic order in Amaterasu's realm, took place as the two-stage punishment given to Susanoo. First, Susanoo's peripheral body part, which was identified with his *kegare*-producing act, was taken away from his being. Next, Susanoo himself was removed from the cosmos.

In his collected sayings compiled by his disciple Kōshin, Myōe says, "My study of the Buddhist Way is aimed simply at understanding how the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past studied and practiced the Buddhist Way. It thus has no merit at all for today's scholar-priests."[34] Elsewhere he says, "I felt no envy at all toward the famed Shingon masters or scholar-priests. They only boast their broad learning, but did not have even a trace of enlightened experience."[35] Myōe's personal goal deviated too drastically from the norm of the *kenmitsu* system, in which the priests' accomplishments were measured according to their academic learning, efficacy in esoteric rituals, and appointment to prestigious office. Did Myōe regard himself as a "disturbance" to the order of the medieval Buddhist establishment? Was his move out of Takaosanji and into the Shiragami mountains his self-imposed expulsion? It may well have been so. The removal of his peripheral body part makes Myōe's case in accord with the legal procedure for the medieval banishment. However, Myōe chose to dissever his ear, the part of his body that *listens*, that as discussed earlier was most amenable and receptive to the established norms, conventions and structure of power. We therefore find elements of objection and protest in Myōe's transforming himself into a *hinin*.

IV

In Myōe's time those criminals punished by disfigurement were typically called *hōmen* (literally, "expelled and pardoned").[36] As Niunoya Tetsuichi has indicated, many of these fingerless, noseless and earless folks were employed by Kebiishi no chō, the court's police agency, as lowest ranked officials in charge of arresting and punishing criminals.[37] The logic behind their employment is that since they were already polluted, they had immunity against other "pollutants" who introduce *kegare* into society. Because of such power, they were also employed for the removal of other types of pollutions in the city of Kyoto, such as processing corpses and the bodies of dead animals. Reflecting their dual function as the polluted and the one capable of purification, these lower officials were also known as *hōben* – the Japanese term for the Buddhist word *upāya*, or expedient means.

Throughout his life Myōe continued to move back and forth between his residence in major temples and the life at several hermitages he had established with his collaborators. Jōkei, Bengyō, and many other celebrated priests of his time respected Myōe's learning.[38] While he declined invitations from Nara temples for prestigious priestly appointments there, Myōe never severed his tie with the Buddhist establishment. Once he succeeded in developing his own style and manner, he seems to have worked to rebuild cooperative relationships with prominent Buddhist teachers. His foundation of Kōzanji in 1206, with the patronage of retired emperor Gotoba, as a new

center of Kegon studies,[39] illustrates Myōe's position as a force for reform within the *kenmitsu* system.[40]

Myōe's activities were particularly noteworthy in the areas that had escaped the attention of the mainstream *kenmitsu* priests within the establishment. One of them was his work of developing a simple ritual aimed at providing the post-mortem salvation to the deceased. This was done by sprinkling over corpses the sand and soil blessed by the *Kōmyō Shingon* (clear light *mantra*).[41] Myōe also opened his temple's gate to *hinin*, lepers and beggars. In 1229 Fujiwara Teika reports in his diary that Myōe's monthly precept ordination ceremony at Kōzanji attracted a very large crowd of *hinin* and beggars. Their overwhelming presence caused confusion among the aristocratic guests, to the degree that the ceremony had to be cancelled.[42] Following the defeat of the imperial force at the Jōkyū disturbance in 1221, Myōe provided shelter to those courtiers pursued by the shogunate's soldiers. He also worked to support those widowed court ladies by ordaining them into nunhood. His work resulted in the establishment of the Zenmyōji convent in 1223.[43] In all these activities, Myōe dealt directly with those beings whom early Kamakura society categorized as "polluted," the dead, the outcasts, the war criminals, and their widows. These beings were beyond the reach of average *kenmitsu* priests, who were charged with performing court rituals and presiding over public lectures, and thus had to protect themselves against pollution. In contrast, precisely because Myōe was the *hinin*-priest, and thus like the *hōmen*/*hōben* in the police force simultaneously tainted and immune from pollutions, he was able to extend salvation to these beings.

V

It is hoped that this brief study has illustrated that Myōe's act of cutting off his ear, his self-address as an outcast, and his unique salvific activities form a contiguous developmental process in which Myōe strived to realize his ideals in early Kamakura society. Although Myōe in his later years seemed to have moved away from physical acts of harming his body for the sake of others, the idea of *sashingyō* remained central for the development of his philosophy. In a work composed in 1215, paraphrasing the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, he comments:

> Everyone pursues attaining the heart of enlightenment, yet it is rare for any practitioner to actually realize such a goal. . . . Therefore it is said in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*: "Great bodhisattvas set aside their hearts out of their five internal organs and cut their hearts into pieces. The bodhisattvas give these pieces of their hearts to sentient beings with the following great vow. 'I pledge to cause all sentient beings to attain the heart of the Diamond Realm adorned with all

> forms of glories. I pledge to make all sentient beings acquire the heart of the banner of great courage, the treasury of knowledge and wisdom.'" Everytime I read them, these passages move me profoundly, and I have no means to stop my tears from falling down.[44]

It seems noteworthy that in the original sūtra passages, the great bodhisattvas are described simply as ones giving their hearts of enlightenment to sentient beings.[45] There is no mention of the bodhisattvas piercing and cutting their hearts into pieces. The image of cleaving must have been added by Myōe in his own reading of the sūtra passage – the image whose meaning, as well as whose sensation, was deeply integral within his body and somaticity. Myōe's act of sacrificing his own body part was an expression of his effort to simultaneously ingrain himself within the Mahāyāna tradition of bodhisattva practice and construct a unique milieu in medieval Japanese society from out of which to engage with the masses in an unprecedented manner. It may be said in this regard that the sword that severed Myōe's right ear on the Shiragami peaks was double-edged, just like the sharp wisdom sword of Mañjuśrī. It inlayed Myōe, on the one hand, in the texture of scriptural episodes surrounding the bodhisattvas who sacrificed their body parts, and, on the other, in the medieval Japanese cultural discourse of crime, pollution, and disfiguration. Myōe's ear-severed body, his social body as the *hinin*-priest, was an exemplary linguistic construct. The very imperfection of his body intertwined Buddhist scriptural language and medieval cultural language and acquired for its own signification polysemic and polygrammatic force. It is the body marked by lack, absence, and emptiness. It was the emptiness of fertility that expanded medieval Buddhist philosophy into the realm of the discriminated and underprivileged, the fertility of emptiness that marked the historical beginning of Buddhist discourse for which problems such as violence, transgression, and discrimination became central.

Notes

1 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō* and *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kanbun gyōjō*, Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 1, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1978, pp. 17–18, 36–41, and 113.
2 *Myōe shōnin yumenoki*, Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 2, pp. 115–67.
3 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 24.
4 Ibid., pp. 17–18.
5 Ibid., pp. 19–20. *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kanbun gyōjō*, p. 94.
6 Ibid., p. 19.
7 Ibid., pp. 17, 21.
8 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 15.
9 For the importance of shashingyō for Myōe, see Nomura Takumi, *Myōe shōnin no kenkyū*, Osaka: Izumi shoin, 2002, pp. 143–56.
10 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 18.

11 Ibid., p. 18.
12 For Mongaku's biography, see Arihara Seiji, *Mongaku shōnin ichidaiki*, Tokyo: Seiabō, 1985.
13 *Gukanshō*, Akamatsu Toshihide et al., eds, Nihon koten bungaku taikei, vol. 86, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1974, p. 279.
14 See *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, pp. 14, 17–18.
15 See, for example, *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, pp.14, 16, 20–21; and a quote from *Kyaku haimōki* in the next section as indicated in note 17. Also see Myōe's comments on the appropriate methods of teaching and studying Buddhist scriptures in *Toganoo Myōe shōnin ikun* in *Myōe shōninshū*, Kubota Jun et al., eds, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1981, pp. 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, and 216.
16 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 22.
17 *Kyaku haimōki. Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 3, Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan, ed., Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1978, pp. 557–558.
18 See, for example, Myōe's waka poem in which he expresses his bond with the pebble stones he collected on the Shiragami beach, the stones polished by the same water that washed the Indian coasts on which the Buddha once preached the Dharma. *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kanbun gyōjo*, p. 120; *Toganoo myōe shōninden*, p. 300.
19 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 24.
20 Ibid., p. 25.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., p. 26.
23 For the system of medieval Japanese punishments, see Katumata Shizuo, "Mimio kiri hana wo sogu," in *Chūsei no tsumi to batsu*, Amino Yoshihiko et al., eds, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1983, pp. 27–43; and Fujiwara Yoshiaki, *Chūseiteki shii to sono shakai*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, pp. 111–141.
24 Nagahara Keiji and Kishi Shōzō, eds, *Zenyaku azumakagami*, vol. 2, Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu ōraisha, 1976, pp. 156–157.
25 *Meigetsuki*. The fourteenth day of the second month in Karoku 2.
26 Article 4 in "Kiino kuni juakurakujiryō adegawashō kamimura hyakushōtō gonjōjō." Quoted in Amino Yoshihiko et al., eds, *Chūsei no tsumi to batsu*, pp. 28–29.
27 See Hosokawa Ryōichi, *Chūsei no mibunsei to hinin*, Tokyo: Nihon editā sukūru, 1994, pp. 6–22.
28 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 30.
29 Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan ed., *Kōzanji kyōzō shōgyō mokuroku* vol. 1, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1971, p. 227.
30 Okuda Isao et al., eds, "Myōe shōnin kankei shikigoshū," Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan, ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō*, vol. 2, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1978, p. 1117b.
31 Ibid., pp. 1109b, 1111b, 1112a, 1114a, 1114b, 1117b. Also see Nomura Takumi, pp. 157–172.
32 Akasaka Norio, "Kegare no seishinshi," in Iwanami kōza tōyō shisō, vol. 15, Nagao Gajin, Izutsu Toshihiko et al., eds, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1989, pp. 85–114; Kuroda Hideo, *Kyōgai no chūseishōchō no chūsei*, Tokyo: Tōkyō daikaku shuppankai, 1986, pp. 185, 239, 294–259, and 263–271; Ishii Susumu, "Mibuki to imashime," in Amino Yoshihiko et al., eds, *Chūsei no tsumi to batsu*, p. 154.
33 Yamaguchi Yoshinori and Kōnoshi Takamitsu, eds, *Shinpen nihon koten bungakuzenshū Kojiki*, Tokyo: Shōgakugan, 1997, pp. 63 and 67–68.
34 *Toganoo Myōe shōnin ikun*, p. 204.
35 *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*, p. 16. *Toganoo Myōe shōninden*. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan, ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 1, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1978, p. 282.

36 Fujiwara Yoshiaki, pp. 123–127.
37 Niunoya, *Kebiishi – chūsei no kegare to kenryoku*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1986, pp. 7–16 and 45–57.
38 *Myōe shōnin shingenden*. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan, ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 1, pp. 247–248. *Kōzanji myōe shōnin kanbun gyōjō*, p. 95.
39 *Kyōzanji myōe shōnin kanbun gyōjō*. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan, ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 1, p. 124.
40 Ryūichi Abé, "Mantra, *Hinin*, and the Feminine: On the Salvational Strategies of Myōe and Eizon," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 13 (2002–2003), pp. 123–125.
41 *Kōmyō shingon doshakaji kanjinki* and *Kōmyō shingon doshakanji kanjin bekki*, in Nihon daizōkyō – kengonshū shōsho. See Mark Unno, *Shingon Reflections: Myōe and the Mantra of Light*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004.
42 *Meigetsuki*. The fifteenth day of the fifth month, Kangi 1.
43 *Kyōzanji myōe shōnin kana gyōjō*. Kōzanji tenseki monjo sōgō chōsadan, ed., *Myōe shōnin shiryō* vol. 1, pp. 56–57.
44 *Sanji sanbōraishaku*. Dainihon bukkyō zensho, vol. 13, p. 133b.
45 T. 10.279: 147a–b.

9

"NOT MERE WRITTEN WORDS"

Perspectives on the language of the *Lotus Sūtra* in medieval Japan

Jacqueline I. Stone

As a text-focused tradition, devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* has on the whole embraced a "language-positive" stance. The sūtra itself predicts eventual buddhahood for all who receive and keep, read, recite, teach, and transcribe it – practices that are explicitly text- and language-centered. As a preeminent example of what Gregory Schopen has termed the "cult of the book," the *Lotus* was deemed interchangeable with the Buddha himself, as indicated in such statements as "If there is anyone who can hold it [this sūtra] / Then he holds the Buddha-body" or:

> O Medicine King! Wherever it may be preached, or read, or recited, or written, or whatever place a roll of this scripture may occupy, in all those places one is to erect a *stūpa* of the seven jewels, building it high and wide and with impressive decoration. There is no need even to lodge *śarīra* in it. What is the reason? Within it there is already a whole body of the Thus Come One.[1]

In East Asia, we find *Lotus Sūtra* transcriptions in which each individual character is housed in a *stūpa* or seated atop a lotus pedestal, as though it were a "living buddha." And in medieval Japan, verbal practice of the *Lotus* – transcription and recitation – was widely conducted as a meditative discipline, for worldly benefits, to expiate sins, to gain birth in a pure land, or for the salvation of the dead.

Nonetheless, the liberative powers of the *Lotus Sūtra* were not, generally speaking, argued explicitly in terms of its language. Scholastic claims for the supremacy of this particular sūtra were based on its discursive content; these include the assertions that the One Buddha Vehicle taught in the *Lotus* reconciles the disparate paths of the *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and bodhisattva

and thus "opens and integrates" all teachings within itself (Jpn. *ichijō kaie*); that the *Lotus* promises buddhahood to all, including those "difficult to save," such as women and evil men; that it represents the "direct path" of realizing buddhahood in this very body; or that it reveals the original ground of the buddha who attained enlightenment, not under the bodhi tree in India, but in the inconceivably remote past. Such arguments drew on the doctrinal classification schemes (Chn. *panjiao*; Jpn. *hankyō* or more commonly *kyōhan*) and traditional commentarial literature of the continental Tiantai school, as well as the works of the Japanese Tendai founder Saichō (767–822). In other kinds of literature, such as didactic tales (Jpn. *setsuwa*), the sūtra's superior magical powers were stressed. An example occurs in the eleventh-century tale of the two monks Kōshō and Hōren, devoted respectively to the *Sūtra of the Victorious King*[2] and the *Lotus*. They decide to test the relative powers of their respective sūtras by comparing who can obtain the higher yield from one *chō* of rice. Kōshō, the *Victorious King* devotee, ploughs and irrigates but plants no seed; nonetheless, rice seedlings sprout throughout his field. Hōren does not even plough or irrigate, but eventually, a gourd seedling sprouts in the middle of his field and grows to cover it entirely. Each gourd that it produces contains bushels of excellent rice, and the gourds never wither, even when winter comes. Thus the superior potency of the *Lotus Sūtra* is made clear to everyone in the province.[3]

In the medieval period, however, specifically in the latter half of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, new arguments began to appear specifically concerning the *language* of the *Lotus Sūtra*. These were chiefly sectarian discourses – emerging within the monastic lineages of medieval Tendai and of the Hokke-shū, as the new Buddhist movement initiated by Nichiren (1222–1282) was then called – and were prompted by several factors. These included internal developments within Tendai, such as the development of original enlightenment doctrine (Jpn. *hongaku hōmon*), which some scholars saw as demanding a rethinking of the status of language. Also influential was a felt need within various *Lotus*-based lineages either to appropriate or to critique newly introduced Zen claims to represent a "wordless transmission." And, in the case of Nichiren, his assertion of the sole truth of the *Lotus Sūtra* over and against Pure Land, Zen, and the esoteric teachings required that he assimilate to his exclusive *Lotus* teaching the entire range of powers usually associated with the incantatory practices of other traditions, such as *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*. In both Tendai and Nichiren circles, the scholastic device of the *kyōhan*, or scheme of doctrinal classification, was extended to address not only issues of doctrinal content and method of teaching – the traditional foci of such organizing systems – but also perspectives on language. These medieval discourses about the words of the *Lotus* are illuminating, not because of their sectarian claims per se, but because of the light they shed on what were probably more generally held but less explicitly articulated notions about religious language. Taking a

thematic approach, this chapter explores three arguments that developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, concerning, respectively, the ontological status of scriptural language, the relationship of sūtra text to contemplative insight, and the thaumaturgical power of the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* to instill buddhahood in insentient objects. These three arguments also respectively highlight aspects of the doctrinal, institutional, and ritual contexts of medieval Japanese Buddhist discourses about language.

Original enlightenment and two views of language

One major characteristic of Japanese Tendai thought in the Heian period (794–1185) was what Paul Groner has called "shortening the path," a progressive reduction, in doctrinal interpretation, of the length of time and level of achievement thought necessary to realize enlightenment.[4] In the tradition of medieval Tendai, based on notions of original enlightenment, consensus held that awakening is realized at the stage of "verbal identity" (Jpn. *myōji-soku*; Ch. *mingziji*). *Myōji-soku* is the second of six stages in a traditional Tiantai *mārga* scheme.[5] First is the stage of *ri-soku* (Ch. *liji*, or "identity in principle"), the state of the ordinary deluded person prior to practice, who has not yet heard the dharma. The next stage, *myōji-soku*, defines the moment at which, by means of "names and letters" (Jpn. *myōji*) – reading the words of the sūtra or hearing a teacher's verbal explanation – one realizes that "all dharmas are the buddhadharma," or the ultimate identity of the buddha and oneself. This stage is said to mark the beginning of the path, and the doctrine of original enlightenment collapses all subsequent stages into this initial stage. From this perspective, there could be no enlightenment unmediated by words; only by reading the characters of the sūtra or hearing an explication of doctrine could original enlightenment be realized. This seems to have led in some cases to a new interest in the status of "names and letters" and also to a desire to apply different understandings of original enlightenment to scriptural language. For, although the term "original enlightenment thought" (Jpn. *hongaku shisō*) has been used by modern scholars to refer comprehensively to the dominant interpretive trend of medieval Tendai, it was far from a unified discourse, and one finds considerable variation among individual transmissions (Jpn. *kuden*). As a sort of rough heuristic device, one could divide this discourse into two major strands.[6] One, whose roots can probably be traced to the *Dasheng qixin lun* (*Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*), sees all phenomena as deriving from an originally pure mind, which, coming into contact with defilements, gives rise to the differentiated phenomenal world. The other strand, which is closer to traditional Tiantai threefold truth theory, does not recognize the mind as being prior to phenomena but holds the two to be simultaneous and mutually encompassing. This view valorizes all things, just as they are, as expressing the true aspect of reality: simultaneously void of substance (emptiness);

existing contingently in dependence upon conditions (conventional existence); and at once both empty and existing but never either exclusively (the middle). Let us consider two texts that respectively link these two understandings of original enlightenment to arguments about the *Lotus Sūtra*'s language.

The words of the **Lotus** *and the "language of dreams"*

The first work we will consider bears the modest title *Sanze shobutsu sōkanmon kyōsō hairyū*, which translates roughly as "the hierarchical classification of doctrinal teachings endorsed by all buddhas of the three time periods"; that is, of the past, present, and future. It will be referred to here by its abbreviated title, *Sōkanmon shō*. This essay has been transmitted as part of the Nichiren canon, though some modern scholars have questioned Nichiren's authorship and regard it as a medieval Tendai writing.[7] Here, however, we will bracket this issue and focus instead on the *Sōkanmon shō*'s content. The "hierarchy of doctrinal teachings" in the title refers to the traditional Tiantai/Tendai classification system that divides Śākyamuni Buddha's fifty-year teaching career into four types of teachings and five chronological periods.[8] In particular, it focuses on the distinction between the "provisional teachings" (Jpn. *gonkyō*), said to have been taught during the first forty-two years of the Buddha's teaching life, and the *Lotus Sūtra*, identified as the "true teaching" (Jpn. *jikkyō*) expounded in the last eight years. First preparing the way with provisional teachings and then revealing *Lotus Sūtra* is assumed in this work to be the common pedagogical pattern followed by all buddhas throughout space and time. This distinction between "provisional" and "true" is then assimilated to several other dichotomies: the provisional teachings are identified with the nine deluded realms of existence from hell-dwellers to bodhisattvas; being accommodated to their auditors' understanding, these teachings are defined as preparatory, skillful means taught to "convert others" (Jpn. *keta*), while the *Lotus Sūtra* is said to represent the realm of buddhahood and the Buddha's "self-practice" (Jpn. *jigyō*) or the spontaneous expression of his own enlightenment. Further, these two major categories, the provisional teachings and the *Lotus Sūtra*, are assimilated respectively to dreams and to the waking state, and to two contrasting views of liberation:

> Dreams are termed provisional, while the waking state is termed true. The reason is that dreams are temporary phenomena and have no substantial nature; therefore, they are termed provisional. Waking reality constantly abides and is the unchanging essence of the mind; therefore, it is termed true. The various sūtras of [the first] forty-two years set forth matters of good and evil occurring in the dream of birth and death; therefore, they are called provisional teachings. They are the scriptural teachings of preparatory, expedient means, by which the Buddha sought to entice and lead the dreaming

> beings, in order to startle and rouse them into the waking reality of the *Lotus Sūtra*. . . . The model of genuine matters is waking reality. Because the dream of birth and death is provisional, without [self-]nature or substance, it is the model of transient things. Therefore, it is termed a false conception. The waking reality of original enlightenment is genuine; because it is the mind separated from birth and extinction, it is the model of true reality. Therefore, it is called the true aspect. Making clear the two words "provisional" and "true" in this light, one should understand the distinction within the sacred teachings of the Buddha's lifetime between the provisional [teachings] expounded in order to instruct others and the true [teaching] that represents the Buddha's self-practice.[9]

The *Lotus Sūtra*, being uniquely identified here with the perspective of original enlightenment (Jpn. *hongaku*), that all beings are buddha inherently, is thus deemed superior to all other sūtras, which are identified with the "inferior" perspective of acquired enlightenment (Jpn. *shikaku*), that buddhahood is attained through a long process of cultivation. In addition, the *Sōkanmon shō* characterizes the difference between these two categories of sūtras in terms of what it claims to be an inherent difference in how their language works soteriologically:

> Living beings in the nine realms [i.e. the states of delusion] are in the midst of the sleep of ignorance at each thought-moment. Submerged in the dream of birth and death, they forget the waking reality of original enlightenment. Attached to rights and wrongs in a dream, they move from darkness into darkness. Therefore, the Tathāgata entered our dream of birth and death, placing himself on the same level as the deluded beings, and by means of the language used in dreams enticed the dreaming beings, leading them gradually by expounding matters concerning the distinction between the good and evil that occur in dreams.[10]

The "evil" distinguished in the language of dreams refers to deluded thoughts and attachments that are to be extirpated. The "good" identified by this same language is the notion of enlightenment as a gradual ascent through successive stages, or the idea that buddhahood is a distant goal to be achieved. Like most writings identified with the doctrine of original enlightenment, the *Sōkanmon shō* calls into question all linear models for attaining buddhahood in which one systematically extirpates defilements and cultivates virtues – that is, models based on the idea of acquired enlightenment. From the standpoint of original enlightenment, we read, such enlightenment is no different from delusion: "Though in the case of the provisional teachings one may exhaust himself in difficult and painful practices and think that one

has at last become a buddha, this is but a transient buddhahood obtained in a dream. When contrasted with the waking reality of original enlightenment, it is in fact not buddhahood at all."[11] Thus the provisional teachings expounded in the "language of dreams" can in themselves do no more than induce one to transitory and insubstantial attainments. Their real soteriological value, the *Sōkanmon shō* tells us, is as a skillful means that prepares people to be mentally receptive to the *Lotus Sūtra*, whose language, it claims, functions in a very different way:

> This sūtra expounds the original mind of waking reality. However, because the beings were habituated in thought to the mind-ground of dreaming, the Buddha borrowed the language used in dreams to teach the waking reality of the original mind. Thus the words [of the *Lotus Sūtra*] are the language used in dreams, but its intent is to teach the original mind, which is waking reality. Such is the intent of the *Lotus Sūtra* and its commentaries. One who fails to understand this clearly will surely go astray with respect to both the words of the sūtra and its commentarial texts.[12]

The sectarian slant of this writing emerges in the claim that this unique linguistic soteriological function applies not only to the *Lotus Sūtra* – which was assumed to represent the Buddha's own words – but also to the Tiantai/Tendai commentarial tradition, which is thereby elevated to the same stature as the Buddha's preaching.

Significantly, there is no "language of waking reality." Words, as the *Sōkanmon shō* goes on to say, merely give verbal utterance to mental discriminations: "Good and evil, pure and defiled, the ordinary worldling and the sage, heaven and earth, large and small, east and west, south and north, the four intermediate directions, zenith and nadir" are all discriminative categories imposed on a reality that is ultimately beyond both words and concepts, "where the path of language is cut off and the workings of the mind are extinguished."[13] Language is, by definition, dreamlike. Thus, according to the *Sōkanmon shō*, the difference between the language of the *Lotus Sūtra* and that of other scriptures is not their words per se – both were expounded in "the language of dreams." But there is a vast difference in the underlying intent with which the Buddha preached them, which in turn, the *Sōkanmon shō* claims, directly translates into a difference in how their language works soteriologically. Thus, where the provisional teachings are said to guide beings from evil toward good within the dream of *saṃsāra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, we are told, enables them to wake up.

An inherent danger of language, as the *Sōkanmon shō* sees it, is not so much the tendency to reify and cling to verbal categories in and of itself but that the shared "language of dreams" might lead one to confuse provisional and true teachings. As the text warns:

> Their language is the same language; their words and letters are without difference. But when on this account people become deluded with respect to words and fail to discern the distinction between provisional and true, then this is termed the extinction of the Buddhadharma.[14]

By defining the difference between the language of the *Lotus Sūtra* and that of other sūtras as a difference of intent and soteriological function, rather than as a difference in their language per se, the *Sōkanmon shō* rather cleverly manages to preserve traditional Mahāyāna ideas about the insubstantial and illusory nature of language while at the same time privileging the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* as uniquely liberative.[15]

"Words and letters are liberation"

Another strand of original enlightenment thought, as noted earlier, denied any distinction of prior or posterior between the mind and all dharmas, holding instead that all phenomena, just as they are, manifest the threefold truth, which is the true nature of reality. In fact, among the three truths, this strand of original enlightenment thought tended if anything to emphasize the truth of conventional existence, because it refers to the concrete actualities (Jpn. *jisō*) before our eyes.[16] Now let us consider a text that links this stance to a highly affirmative view of scriptural language: the *Kankō ruijū* (*Collection of the light of Han*), a Tendai collection of recorded oral transmissions (Jpn. *kirikami*), possibly concerning debate topics, and dating from around the latter part of the thirteenth century.[17] Specifically, we will consider two transmissions. The first addresses the topic "All dharmas are originally none other than the Buddhadharma" (Jpn. *issai shohō wa moto kore buppō nari*) and poses the question of whether "gaining access to enlightenment through written words" is something confined to practitioners of inferior capacity or whether this also applies to practitioners of "the perfect and sudden calming and contemplation" (Jpn. *endon shikan*), who are of the most superior capacity and are said to be able to gain enlightenment on merely hearing that "all dharmas are the Buddhadharma":

> Answer: This teaching should be passed on through oral transmission. First, the sūtra rolls with their visible form, produced after Buddha's nirvāṇa, are not inferior to his verbal preaching while he was in the world. The reason is that the Buddha's preaching can take the form of any of the six sense objects.[18] His preaching while in the world was audible sound, while the sūtra rolls are preaching in visible form. People ordinarily say that the Tathāgata's preaching while in the world was superior while the visible sūtra rolls are inferior, but this way of thinking is gravely mistaken. . . . [Thus]

> the great teacher Jikaku [Ennin, 794–864] said, "Śākyamuni's preaching lasted only fifty years, while the teachings that Ānanda made visible in concrete form [by compiling them in sūtras] will endure until the human lifespan reaches sixty thousand years [in the upswing of the next world cycle]. Thus, Ānanda is superior to Śākyamuni." When we inquire into the nature of the dharmas, the real Buddha (Jpn. *jitsubutsu*) has no [separate] aspect but merely benefits by pointing to all dharmas [as manifesting the true aspect in themselves]. This is the true form of the Tathāgata's preaching. To say that those who attain the way through written words are not practitioners of the perfect and sudden [teaching] is a serious error.[19]

Here the written language of the sūtras is strongly valorized, first, because, like all phenomena, it is said to instantiate the true aspect of reality, and, second, because it endures considerably longer than the spoken words of the historical Buddha.

These themes are further extended in a second transmission in the same text, entitled "written words are not [mere] written words; words and letters are liberation" (Jpn. *mon wa mon ni arazu, moji soku gedatsu nari*).[20] Its argument is leveled against both "text-reciting monks" (Jpn. *jumon no hōshi*), who "understand written words to be only written words, and do not know that they are in their essence the inconceivable threefold truth," and "meditation teachers of dark illumination" (Jpn. *anshō no zenji*) who "deny the doctrinal meaning of written words and do not understand that written words are precisely liberation."[21] The passage continues, "The understanding of our school is that, because the teachings are none other than the true aspect, written words are precisely the unborn." It goes on to explain that, among the three kinds of *tathāgata* bodies, written words represent the preaching of the unproduced manifested body (Skt. *nirmāṇakāya*, Jpn. *ōjin*) of the *tathāgata* of original enlightenment. Therefore, according to a secret teaching said to have been given to Saichō by his teacher Daosui when he was about to leave China and return to Japan, each written character necessarily displays the eight phases of that Buddha's life. This last claim is developed through a series of eight associations by resemblance. The vertical orientation of written characters represents the Buddha first being born in the Tuṣita Heaven and then descending to this world. Written words abide on paper; this represents the Buddha entering the womb. Written characters have a clear form; this represents the Buddha emerging from the womb. The original nature of written words is pure and undefiled; this represents the Buddha renouncing the world. The fact that written characters have no obstruction [occupy their own space?] represents the Buddha subduing Māra. Because they instantiate the threefold truth, characters are perfectly endowed with enlightened nature; this represents the Buddha attaining the

Way. Written words have the outstanding function of eliciting human understanding; this is the form of the Buddha's originally inherent turning of the wheel of the Wonderful Dharma. And the essence of characters being ungraspable, unborn, and beyond conception is none other than the Buddha's entry into nirvāṇa:

> Each word and phrase is in every case endowed with the eight aspects [of the Buddha's career]. Thus we speak of the principle that written words are precisely liberation. Ignorant persons do not know this meaning, and so they either cling to words and letters, or reject words and letters altogether. Neither way will do. . . . The *Denbōketsu* states, "The Great Teacher Nanyue [Huisi, 515–577] said, 'Words are none other than liberation. If one seeks liberation apart from words, there is no such place [where it can be found]'."[22]

Apart from the "originally inherent turning of the wheel of the Wonderful Dharma" (Jpn. *honnu no ten myōhōrin*), possibly a reference to the *Lotus Sūtra*, this text would seem to be about the language of sūtras in general, rather than the *Lotus Sūtra* specifically. The sectarian thrust comes in the identification of written language with the unborn as a teaching of "our school" and the invocation of a secret transmission handed down from the Tendai founder Saichō.

Both of the texts considered here, the *Sōkanmon shō* and the *Kankō ruijū*, are consistent with the medieval Tendai claim that awakening is achieved at the stage of verbal identity; one gains access to enlightenment through the verbal teachings of the sūtra. However, within that shared assumption, the *Kankō ruijū* takes a more ontologically positive view of language than does the *Sōkanmon shō*; where the *Sōkanmon shō* sees language only as a skillful means leading to awakening, in the *Kankō ruijū*, language is said actually to instantiate the originally inherent Buddha. In these two texts, that difference is linked, respectively, to the two streams of medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought mentioned above: one that sees phenomena as mind-produced and therefore ultimately illusory, and another that sees concrete phenomena as instantiating ultimate reality just as they are.

The hierarchy of scripture and insight and the Tendai "wordless" transmission

Another tension within medieval Tendai circles concerned the relation between doctrinal study (Jpn. *kyōsō*) and contemplative insight (Jpn. *kanjin*). The Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (538–597) had deemed both to be equally important and mutually dependent, like "the two wheels of a cart, the two wings of a bird."[23] The mainstream position in medieval Japanese Tendai seems to have been similar: what is expounded in the scriptural text of the

Lotus and its commentarial tradition (Jpn. *kyōsō*) and what is discerned in meditative practice (Jpn. *kanjin*) were regarded as same truth, in the one case conceived intellectually and discursively, and in the other grasped intuitively. However, around the early fourteenth century, some Tendai scholars began to claim that "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus Sūtra*" (Jpn. *shikan shō Hokke*), generating a controversy within Tendai circles as to whether enlightenment is accessed through the text of the *Lotus Sūtra* or transmitted independently of it.[24]

Shikan shō Hokke represents a "strong reading" of a new classification of teachings (Jpn. *kyōhan*) that had begun to emerge, under the influence of original enlightenment thought, within the Eshin school of medieval Tendai, known as the "fourfold rise and fall" (Jpn. *shijū kōhai*). This system of classification ranks the *Lotus Sūtra* above all other verbal teachings, and then, above the *Lotus Sūtra*, establishes "meditative insight" (Jpn. *kanjin*, literally, "contemplation of the mind") as a separate and ultimate category.[25] The first of these four hierarchical divisions in this classification is the pre-*Lotus Sūtra* teachings (Jpn. *nizen*), which, as seen in the *Sōkanmon shō*, were deemed mere provisional expedients. The second division is the trace teaching (Jpn. *shakumon*), or first fourteen chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which sets forth the One Vehicle teaching and the "true aspect of the dharmas" but – in that it presents the Buddha as a historical person who achieved awakening in this lifetime as the culmination of many *kalpas* of effort – was still said to belong to the inferior perspective of acquired enlightenment, proceeding in linear fashion from cause (practice) to effect (enlightenment). The third is the "origin teaching" (Jpn. *honmon*), or second fourteen chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which, in revealing the Buddha to have been awakened since the inconceivably remote past, was equated with the position of original enlightenment, a "mandalic" view in which cause and effect are present simultaneously. The Buddha's attainment in the remote past (Jpn. *ji kenpon*), described in this section of the *Lotus Sūtra*, specifically, in the sixteenth or "Fathoming the Lifespan of the Tathāgata" chapter, was interpreted in medieval Tendai as a metaphor for the timeless enlightenment innate in all (Jpn. *ri kenpon*). These first three divisions in the *shijū kōhai* taxonomy together represent *kyōsō* (doctrinal teachings). The fourth category is *kanjin*, literally "mind contemplation," and does not refer to a textual category.

What exactly did it mean to place this non-verbal, non-discursive category at the top of a hierarchy of teachings? Did it mean simply that doctrinal teachings were to be internalized through meditative practice, or that words were to be transcended altogether? This question is complicated by the fact that *kanjin* by this time had acquired a range of meanings. Like the term *shikan* (calming and contemplation), with which it was used almost interchangeably, it could denote not only meditative disciplines as such or the insight discerned thereby, but the essence of the Tendai-*Lotus* teachings.[26]

By the late Heian period, *kanjin* had also come to be understood as a "contemplation of actuality" (Jpn. *jikan*) associated specifically with the origin teaching, which simply denoted the contemplation (or discernment) that all things, just as they are, manifest original enlightenment.[27] This was contrasted with the "contemplation of principle" (Jpn. *rikan*), denoting those more traditional meditation methods in which a focused mind is brought to bear upon analysis of a specific object; these methods were deemed inferior and associated with the trace teaching. In later medieval Tendai texts, *kanjin* was frequently used to indicate less a specific contemplation method than insight into original enlightenment, conceived of as an *a priori* ground, "innate and self-luminous" (Jpn. *tenshin dokurō*),[28] "prior to the distinction of trace and origin" (Jpn. *honjaku mibun*) and "before the arising of a single thought." *Kanjin* could also indicate a particular hermeneutical perspective, from which traditional texts, such as the *Lotus Sūtra*, the works of Zhiyi, and the commentaries of Zhanran (711–782), were "decoded" via such devices as word play, creative repunctuation of Chinese texts, and associations of resemblance to reveal the message of original enlightenment.[29]

Given this range of meanings, it was possible, at one end of an interpretive spectrum, to see "mind contemplation" as still dependent on and shaped by discursive understanding of the scriptural and commentarial texts; as noted above, this may even have been the dominant Tendai position. A passage from a *Lotus Sūtra* commentary compiled by the Tendai monk Sonshun (1451–1514) illustrates this stance by interpreting "words and letters" in terms of each stage of the fourfold rise and fall. First, from the standpoint of the pre-*Lotus Sūtra* teachings, words and letters are provisional designations, a skillful means for arriving at the truth that is the dharma nature. When it comes to realization of this ultimate truth, the provisional designations of words and letters must be set aside; this is what is meant by the transmitted saying that the teachings of the sūtras are like a finger pointing at the moon. The second standpoint is that of the trace teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*: because all dharmas are shown to manifest the true aspect, words and letters are precisely liberation. That is, words and letters reveal all the 3000 realms that constitute phenomenal reality to be the single truth that is unchanging suchness (Jpn. *fuhen shinnyo*). From this perspective, the finger is itself the moon. From the standpoint of the origin teaching, the third standpoint, the "words and letters" of the *Lotus Sūtra* instantiate the mutual interpenetration of concrete particulars (Jpn. *jiji sōsoku*), each embodying the subtle essence that is suchness according with conditions (Jpn. *zuien shinnyo*). From the fourth standpoint, that of mind discernment (Jpn. *kanjin*), the "words and letters" of the entire *Lotus Sūtra* instantiate each concrete particular encompassing all 3000 realms. "Words and letters" are the concrete forms assumed by the moment-to-moment mental workings arising from the inner enlightenment of the practitioner's mind, which is endowed with all 3000 realms in each thought-moment.

These "words and letters of mind contemplation" (Jpn. *kanjin no moji*) surpass even the golden body of the Buddha.[30] The key point for our purposes in this rather complex passage is that "words and letters" are accorded greater, not less, significance with each step up the hierarchy of teachings. The relegation of verbal expressions to the provisional status of a "finger pointing at the moon" is associated with the very lowest level. The oblique thrust at Zen is, as we shall see below, almost certainly no accident. Thus, for some Tendai thinkers, the establishment of "mind contemplation" as the highest category of a *kyōhan* did not in any way imply a transcendence of verbal expression.

At the other end of the spectrum, however, were the advocates of the "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus*" position, some of whom went as far as to assert that *shikan* represents a separate lineage or school (Jpn. *shū*): the textual tradition of the *Lotus Sūtra* and its commentarial tradition formed the "Hokke-shū,"[31] while the "contemplation of the mind" transmitted from master to disciple represented the "Tendai-shū." Two examples of this claim are cited below, both taken from collections of "orally transmitted doctrines" (Jpn. *kuden hōmon*) compiled respectively by Shinsō (*fl.* 1329) of the Gyōsen-bō branch of the Sugiu lineage of the Eshin school, and by the above-mentioned Sonshun, a later figure active in eastern Japan who also had Sugiu ties:

> According to transmission, there is a secret matter that is the inner enlightenment of the Buddhas. This is calming and contemplation (Jpn. *shikan*). Śākyamumi did not divulge this during his lifetime, but after his preaching was concluded, he extended both feet from his golden coffin. This is calming and contemplation, and Kāśyapa understood it. This is the calming and contemplation that the Great Teacher Tiantai [Zhiyi] practiced in his own mind. Thus, of the two, doctrinal teachings and contemplation, the transmission of the doctrinal teachings is called the Hokke-shū, while the calming and contemplation practiced [by Zhiyi] within his own mind is called the Tendai-shū.[32]

> With respect to calming and contemplation: The transmissions concerning doctrinal study and contemplative learning are not the same. The lineage of doctrinal study was passed from the Great Awakened World Honored One [Śākyamuni] to Kāśyapa, Ānanda, and the others of the twenty-three patriarchs down to [the Tiantai forebears] Huiwen and Nanyue [Huisi], who received the transmission of doctrine. This is the transmission of the Hokke-shū. [The transmission of the Tendai-shū] was conferred directly by the Lord Śākyamuni from within the *stūpa* of [the Tathāgata] Many Jewels [Prabhūtaratna] to Huiwen and Nanyue and to the present, latter

> age. Opening the enlightenment of a single thought-moment being three thousand realms (Jpn. *ichinen sanzen*), [one sees that] the assembly on Sacred [Vulture] Peak is still solemnly present and has not yet dispersed; this transmission conferred directly upon us by Śākyamuni from within the jeweled *stūpa* is the lineage of contemplative learning and pertains to the Tendai-shū. . . . Calming and contemplation is the Tendai-shū, and thus Tendai could be called the Shikan-shū. . . . The Tendai-shū establishes its essentials where heaven and earth have not yet divided, where delusion and enlightenment are a single suchness.[33]

These passages invoke a number of mythic traditions in support of a "wordless" Tendai transmission. The first seems to conflate the tradition that Kāśyapa (Pāli: Kassapa) reverenced the Buddha's feet on the funeral pyre with Chan/Zen claims for the origin of the mind-to-mind transmission in a nonverbal insight communicated to Mahākāśyapa by the Buddha. In this passage, "calming and contemplation" is given the status of the Buddha's final teaching. The second passage draws on the tradition that the great Tiantai patriarchs first heard the preaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* from Śākyamuni on Sacred Vulture Peak – though usually Huisi and Zhiyi, rather than Huiwen and Huisi, are the two said to have been present in that assembly. This element appears in Zhiyi's biography, by way of praise for his mastery of the *Lotus samādhi*, and was also incorporated by Saichō into his lineages for the Tendai Hokke-shū and the bodhisattva precepts.[34] In medieval Tendai, however, the "transmission on Vulture Peak" was used to legitimate the tradition of secret oral transmissions and was probably influenced by the tradition of Vajrasatta's transmission of the esoteric (Vajrayāna) teachings to Nāgārjuna in the iron *stūpa* in southern India. Virtually all medieval Tendai lineages claim to derive from a direct transmission made by Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak. The notion that "the assembly on Sacred [Vulture] Peak is still solemnly present and has not yet dispersed" (Jpn. *Ryōzen ichie gennen misan*), which appears in a number of medieval Tendai transmission texts, reflects the shift from linear and historical to mandalic modes of thinking common to both esoteric thought and original enlightenment discourse.[35] Here, it is assimilated to the origins of a unique "Tendai lineage," independent of the *Lotus Sūtra* and its commentaries, that is said to be prior, not only to the scriptural tradition, but to historical time or to any phenomenal distinction.

The Zen connection

Scholars have long suggested a connection between Tendai claims that "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus Sūtra*" and the Chan/Zen rhetoric of a "wordless transmission" that had recently been introduced

from Song China.[36] And, indeed, there is some evidence to support the suggestion of Zen influence or appropriation. Sources both internal and external to medieval Tendai claim that Jōmyō (*fl.* latter thirteenth century), regarded as the founder of the influential Gyōsen-bō branch of the Tendai Sugiu lineage, had received instruction from the prominent Zen master and abbot of the Tōfukuji, Enni (a.k.a. Bennen or Shōichi Kokushi, 1202–1280), who was also learned in the Tendai and esoteric teachings.[37] Sonshun, another of those who asserted an Enni–Jōmyō connection, even wrote: "The Zen teaching of a separate transmission apart from the sūtras is [simply] a different term for calming and contemplation (Jpn. *shikan*), one that has not been known in prior ages."[38] While these sources postdate Enni, Enni's own commentary on the *Dari jing* (Jpn. *Dainichi kyō*, Skt. *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra*) indicates that he did indeed see contemplative insight as transcending the sūtra text:

> The trace teaching opens the provisional to reveal the true. The origin teaching opens the trace to reveal the origin. These are the unique properties of the *Lotus*, not found in other sūtras. But mind contemplation (Jpn. *kanjin*) surpasses both trace and origin in its depth and loftiness.[39]

Such statements in Enni's own writing may have laid the foundation for later stories about him conferring the wordless Zen transmission upon Jōmyō.

A connection between "wordless Zen" and claims that "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus Sūtra*" is also assumed in texts critical of the *shikan shō Hokke* position. The most famous is a work called *Risshōkan jō* (On establishing correct contemplation) traditionally attributed to Nichiren, which reads in part:

> Among those who study Tendai doctrine in the world today, there appear to be many who revere the practice of contemplating the mind and discard the origin and trace teachings of the *Lotus*. . . . Those who abandon the *Lotus Sūtra* and regard only contemplation as primary are guilty of a grave slander of the Dharma, a great perverted view, an act of devils. . . . The Tendai-shū today is so deplorable as to assert that because *shingon* [i.e. Taimitsu] sets forth both the principles and practices of the esoteric teachings, it surpasses the *Lotus Sūtra*; thus they find it reasonable that calming and contemplation (Jpn. *shikan*) also surpasses the *Lotus*. Next, with regard to the argument that, when applying the interpretation of *kanjin*, the origin and trace teachings are to be abandoned: based on what passage of the *Lotus Sūtra* are we to take commentaries from later teachers as fundamental and abandon the Buddha's teaching? Even if this were the interpretation of Tiantai [Zhihyi], it

violates the golden words of Śākyamuni and goes against the *Lotus Sūtra*, and is absolutely never to be adopted. . . . If calming and contemplation is not grounded in the *Lotus Sūtra*, then the Tendai *shikan* becomes equivalent to the Daruma[-shū]'s diabolical and false teaching of a separate transmission outside the scriptures.[40]

There is no doubt that Nichiren thought contemplation, or faith, should be grounded in the *Lotus Sūtra* text, and he dismissed Zen claims to represent a "wordless transmission" as a dangerous absurdity.[41] The *Risshōkan jō* is traditionally dated 1274, and, if authentic, represents the earliest known reference to the *shikan shō Hokke* doctrine.[42]

Voices within Tendai critical of the claim that "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus Sūtra*" also took pains to dissociate *shikan* from the Zen wordless transmission, as in this passage from a fourteenth-century *kuden hōmon* collection, which echoes the terms of the *Kankō ruijū* discussed above:

Question: Should calming and contemplation (Jpn. *shikan*) be understood in terms of "not establishing words and letters"?

Answer: According to transmission, this school teaches the principle of direct realization: therefore, we take as our basis the capacity to gain access [to enlightenment] through visible forms [such as written words]. Thus it is said that "words and letters are liberation," and accordingly, [the notion of] not establishing words and letters will not hold. This is because gaining access through form is our foundation. Only attachment to words [for their own sake] should be admonished.[43]

We also see criticism of the Zen "wordless" position in a passage from Sonshun's *Lotus Sūtra* commentary describing a mythical encounter between the founding figures of the Chinese Tiantai and Chan schools:

by perusing the words and phrases of the sūtras and treatises, we are able to distinguish shallow from profound and clearly understand the essential path of liberation from birth and death. If there were no words and letters, the all-pervading dharma essence would be impossible to realize. Therefore our [Tendai] school interprets words and letters to be none other than liberation. . . . When the Great Teacher Tiantai [Zhiyi] was lecturing on calming and contemplation [i.e. the *Mohezhiguan*], Bodhidharma arrived in the air and said, "Words and letters are not truth. Why do you preach words and letters?" At that time, the Great Teacher replied, "You are foolish and understand neither the nature of words and

> letters nor the truth of the dharma body." Whereupon Bodhidharma disappeared.[44]

Thus both proponents and critics of the *shikan shō Hokke* position equated it with the Zen transmission "independent of words and letters," a notion they valorized in diametrically opposite ways. Critics of the Tendai "wordless transmission" argued their case on two major grounds: first, that teachings cannot be communicated without verbal expressions; second, that words and letters, like all concrete phenomena, are inseparable from ultimate reality.

Shikan shō Hokke *and lineage identity*

Claims within medieval Tendai about meditative insight surpassing the *Lotus Sūtra* text and the existence of a separate transmission outside the textual tradition may have had less to do with a critique of the soteriological value of scripture and language than with asserting a unique identity for particular lineages and institutions. Two patterns of evidence suggest this. First, medieval sources – again both internal and external to Tendai – identify the *shikan sō Hokke* position specifically with the so-called provincial Tendai (Jpn. *inaka Tendai*) of the Kantō or eastern provinces and especially with the influential Senba *dangisho* (seminary) at Muryōjuji at Senba in Kawagoe in Musashi province, established by the Tendai scholar-monk Sonkai (1253–1332), who played a key role in the spread of Tendai in eastern Japan. Mt. Hiei, it is suggested, wanted little to do with this doctrine. Sonshun, who had close ties to Senba, writes:

> On the mountain side [Hiei], they do not postulate a dharma of "contemplating the mind" (Jpn. *kanjin*) that transcends the origin and trace teachings. Hence they do not establish a difference between the Tendai and Hokke [lineages]. However, on the *inaka* side [the Kantō], since the time of Sonkai, they do generally say that there exists a dharma transcending the origin and trace teachings, postulating a variation of "mind contemplation" (Jpn. *kanjin*). The trace and origin teachings pertain to the Hokke-shū; above these is placed "mind contemplation," which pertains to the Tendai-shū. This [distinction] is in general not permitted on the mountain; it is taught only at Senba.[45]

The peculiarity of this doctrine to the Senba tradition, and its lack of attraction for scholars on Mt. Hiei, was also recognized by outsiders, namely scholar-monks of the emergent Nichiren Hokke-shū. An example is Shinnyoin Nichijū (1406–1486) of the Nichiren temple Hongakuji in Kyoto, who as a young man had studied on Mt. Hiei with the Tendai monk Jōgen of the Eastern Pagoda precinct. He writes:

> Within the Tendai school, an interpretation is posited that *shikan* is superior, and the *Lotus* inferior. Of the two schools [of Tendai], Eshin and Danna, the Danna school has taken no account of this [position], but in the Eshin school, it is a valued doctrine.[46] Within the Eshin school, it is the particular doctrine of the Sugiu line, but even within the Sugiu line, scholars of the main lineage on the mountain [Hiei] do not assert it. Because it is a doctrine of the Sugiu lineage, scholars such as Zōjō-bō Jōgen and others at the Kitadani of the Eastern Pagoda speak of it when it is natural to do so, but while speaking, they do not place faith in it. In general, it is said to be asserted by [Tendai] scholars of the provinces. . . . It is a doctrine put forth by Sonkai Hōin of Senba.[47]

Similar themes had already emerged in a more detailed, and more critical, account of the origins of the *shikan shō Hokke* claim, in the *Hokke mondō shōgishō* (Judgments on questions and answers concerning the *Lotus*) written between 1333 and 1344 by Tōgakuin Nichizen (1294–1344) of the Nakayama branch of the Nichiren Hokke-shū. In this work, Nichizen records that he had formerly studied on Mt. Hiei at the Nishidani of the Eastern Pagoda precinct. There he was told that the doctrine of "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus*" had first been articulated by one Seikai of the Tsuchimikado-monzeki lineage of the Eshin school, during a debate. According to Nichizen's account, Seikai, who was acting as judge (Jpn. *shōgisha*), declared: "Because *shikan* is the doctrine that the great teacher [Zhiyi] practiced within his mind, he realized it without reliance on sūtras and treatises." Pressed for the source of this radical assertion, Seikai confessed that it was not a transmission received from a teacher but his own realization, though he believed it to be a valid claim. Subsequently he was admonished that "scholar-monks of the mountain should not uphold a perverse doctrine such as this which slanders the Dharma." In the east, however, Sonkai got word of this doctrine and inquired about it on Mt. Hiei from Seikai's disciple Ikkai. Ikkai advised him that it was not an established teaching and should not be communicated to others. Nevertheless, Sonkai regarded it as a most profound secret teaching and transmitted it to his disciples.[48]

While not all Tendai scholars of the Kantō embraced the *shikan shō Hokke* position, and some scholarly disagreement remains about who first asserted it, it does seem unmistakably to have been associated with eastern Tendai and with the Senba dangisho and Sonkai's lineage in particular. As reflected in the pejorative term "*inaka* Tendai," Tendai of the eastern provinces was a new tradition, one that had emerged under warrior patronage only since the Kamakura period (1185–1333), and that depended on a very different socio-economic base than did the older and more aristocratic Tendai of the imperial capital (Jpn. *miyako Tendai*). By the claim that verbally

expressed doctrine (Jpn. *kyō*) and nonverbal insight (Jpn. *kan*) represent two independent dharma transmissions, Senba scholars arrogated to themselves the designation "Tendai-shū," which they identified with their own signature doctrinal position that there exists an ineffable dharma known only through meditative insight – designated as *kanjin* or *shikan* – independent of and prior to the origin and trace teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*. It is not hard to imagine that they deployed this doctrine to challenge the authority of Mt. Hiei, asserting an identity both independent of, and superior to, the parent tradition.

The second pattern of evidence suggesting that claims for the *shikan shō Hokke* position served to bolster Senba institutional identity has to do with the identity of its most vocal critics. In the first part of the fourteenth century, when this doctrine began to draw widespread attention, the most hostile criticisms of it emerged not from Mt. Hiei – where it may have been dismissed as a minor heterodoxy – but from the Nichiren Hokke-shū. Nichiren had absolutized the *Lotus Sūtra* as the only true teaching and held that contemplative practice (Jpn. *kanjin*) must be grounded in the sūtra text, so claims that "*shikan* surpasses the *Lotus*" were of course blasphemous to his followers. We have already cited Nichizen's account of the origins of this doctrine as the arbitrary invention of the monk Seikai. Nor was Nichizen the only Hokke-shū scholar to express such views. Daien Ajari Nichiden (1277–1341), who held the position of chief of instruction (Jpn. *gakutō*) for the Hokke-shū communities of monks at Hikigayatsu and Ikegami in Kamakura, observed in 1322:

> There is a perverted doctrine that makes contemplation of the mind the essence, abolishing the origin and trace teachings. . . . One should abide in Namu-myōhō-renge-kyō [the practice of chanting the *daimoku* taught by Nichiren], in which origin and trace [teachings] are inconceivably one.[49]

Nichizen's teacher Jōgyōin Nichiyū (1298–1374), third in the Nakayama lineage of the Hokke-shū based in Shimōsa province, was also critical: "To say that when the great teaching of *kanjin* rises, the great teachings of the origin and trace teachings are superseded, is an extremely distorted view."[50]

In contrast to their Tendai counterparts, who held that, properly understood, all teachings and practices could be understood as expressions of the "One Vehicle," Nichiren's followers embraced the strongly exclusivistic position that the *Lotus Sūtra* alone represents the truth and that all other teachings must be rejected as provisional. But such an assertion would become meaningless were insight into true reality to be something not based upon texts and independent of written teachings, even of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The entire Nichiren argument could be dismissed as one still pertaining to the

inferior level of textual transmission, transcended by the Tendai transmission of *shikan*. Thus it is not surprising that Hokke-shū scholars should vehemently oppose the *shikan shō Hokke* claim on doctrinal grounds. But there may also have been more at stake. In the first part of the fourteenth century, Kantō Tendai and the Nichiren Hokke-shū were both new movements based in the same eastern provinces and competing for patronage among the same social class, warriors and local landholders. One can easily imagine, as Ono Bunkō has suggested, that "calming and contemplation surpasses the *Lotus*" was asserted within the Senba lineage at least in part as a polemic against the position of its chief rivals in the Kantō, the Nichiren Hokke followers, who maintained that the *Lotus Sūtra* alone represents the true vehicle of salvation and that all other teachings must be rejected.[51] Given the status of Senba and the Kantō-based Nichiren Hokke-shū as institutional competitors in the same geographic area, it seems possible that these sharply contrasting doctrinal positions developed at least in part as statements of their rivalry and were reinforced as they defined their emerging traditions, not only with respect to Mt. Hiei, but over and against one another. This would then be a case in which a controversy explicitly concerning the relationship of discursive teachings and intuitive insight might implicitly have also been about institutions and lineage.

In closing this discussion of the *shikan shō Hokke* controversy, we may recall, as has often been noted, that rhetoric about "not relying on words and letters" did not prevent Chan/Zen practitioners from producing a vast corpus of written literature. Similarly, despite claims to represent a unique "Tendai-shū" transmission prior to verbal and conceptual distinctions, Tendai *dangisho* in the Kantō, and Senba in particular, became thriving centers of textual production and training in doctrinal study and debate. When Oda Nobunaga razed Mt. Hiei in 1571, destroying the monastery's extensive libraries, they were restored by drawing on the archives of Tendai seminaries in the eastern provinces.[52]

The words of the *Lotus* and the buddhahood of insentient beings

Let us move back now to the thirteenth century to consider another argument about the language of the *Lotus Sūtra*, this one from the Buddhist teacher Nichiren (1222–1282). Nichiren, for whom no authority superseded that of the *Lotus*, adamantly stressed the soteriological efficacy of the sūtra's words in both discursive and ritual dimensions. The central practice that he taught, chanting the sūtra's *daimoku* (title) in the formula "namu-myōhō-renge-kyō" is of course a verbal practice. In his teaching, the five characters of the title, "myōhō-renge-kyō" in Japanese pronunciation, contain the power and meaning of all the Buddha's teachings; they are the seed of buddhahood

in the practitioner's mind, the pre-eminent form of practice, and the object of worship toward which practice is directed.[53] Moreover, the calligraphic *maṇḍala* that he devised as a focus of faith and practice for his followers depicts the assembly of the *Lotus Sūtra* as the enlightened dharma realm, not with images, but with written characters for names and phrases taken from sūtra text.[54] In denying the authority of any teaching except the *Lotus Sūtra*, Nichiren invested the sūtra's words, especially the title, with all the benefits that religion in medieval Japan was thought to confer: protection, healing, worldly good fortune, the realization of enlightenment in this lifetime, and birth after death in a pure land.

Apart from his claim for the exclusive truth of the *Lotus Sūtra*, Nichiren's own ideas about the powers of religious language were not unique, but broadly representative of his age. However, in asserting that ritual use of the *Lotus Sūtra* should in all cases replace other, often much more widely employed incantatory language, such as the *nenbutsu* or the *mantra*s and *dhāraṇī*s of esoteric Buddhism, he was compelled to articulate exactly how he thought such powers worked. This gives us some explicitly theorized accounts on his part of the efficacy of verbal invocations, something that was often probably simply taken for granted.

It would be impossible, in a single chapter, to explicate fully Nichiren's views on the language of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Instead, this section focuses on a specific strand of his thinking in this regard, namely the ritual efficacy of the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* in empowering inanimate objects, which Nichiren discusses in terms of the principles of both "the realization of buddhahood by grasses and trees" (Jpn. *sōmoku jōbutsu*) and "the realization of buddhahood with this very body" (Jpn. *sokushin jōbutsu*).

Empowering icons: the buddhahood of grasses and trees

"The realization of buddhahood by grasses and trees" represents a distinctively Japanese development of broader East Asian concepts of the buddha nature of insentient beings. Modern scholarship has often regarded it as expressing the soteric value of "nature." For Nichiren, however, *sōmoku jōbutsu* had the more specific meaning of empowering icons: buddha images, and also the calligraphic *maṇḍala* that he devised. In elaborating on this topic, he provided a theoretical basis for conceptualizing the use of ritual language to consecrate or "open the eyes" of inanimate images to serve as *honzon*, objects of worship. Here we focus on a letter to a lay follower called Mokue nizō kaigen no koto ("On consecrating wooden and painted images"),[55] whose thesis is that only the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* are efficacious in performing the *kaigen kuyō* (eye-opening) ceremony whereby a new buddha image is ritually empowered as an object of worship or contemplation. To summarize a rather long introductory passage, Nichiren's argument begins as follows:

> A living buddha has thirty-two distinguishing physical marks. From the Dharma wheels on the soles of the feet to the knot of flesh (Skt. *uṣṇīṣa*) on the crown of his head, thirty-one of these marks have visible form and can be iconographically represented. Nevertheless, a wooden or painted image of the Buddha is not equal to the Buddha himself, for it lacks one physical mark: the pure voice (Skt. *brahmasvara*, Jpn. *bonnonjō*) with which the Buddha preached the Dharma.[56] Not only does an image lack the Buddha's voice; it also has no mental dharmas and is therefore merely insentient form.

These twin lacks are supplied, Nichiren informs us, by the "eye opening" ritual, in which a text is placed before the image (and presumably also recited). Thereby, the image is endowed with all thirty-two marks and also with mind. However, the kind of "mind" or mental dharmas with which the image is endowed will depend upon what text is used. If one places before it a sūtra or treatise dealing with the five precepts or the ten precepts, the image will become equivalent, respectively, to a *cakravartin* or to the deity Indra. If one places before the image a treatise on achieving release from the realm of desire, it will become equivalent to Lord Brahmā. If one places one of the āgamas before the image, it will become equivalent to an *arhat*. Nichiren then begins to invoke categories specific to Tiantai/Tendai classificatory schema. If one places before the image one of the common *prajñā* teachings expounded during the "extended" (Skt. *vaipulya*) or *prajñā* periods of the Buddha's teaching career, it will become equivalent to a *pratyekabuddha*. If one places before the image the *Flower Ornament Sūtra* or a *vaipulya* or *prajñā* teaching of the distinct or perfect categories, it will become equivalent to a bodhisattva. Finally, "when the *Lotus Sūtra* is placed before a buddha [image] possessing thirty-one features, the image will surely become the Buddha of the pure and perfect [teaching]."[57] This claim clearly rests on a hierarchical classification of the Buddhist teachings in which the *Lotus Sūtra* ranks foremost. In other words, the level of "mind" with which a text can endow an image depends on its rank in the *kyōhan* or system of doctrinal classification; by implication, the degree of its magical power to animate an insentient image is qualified by its discursive content.

Such a claim has obvious polemical potential, and Nichiren quickly deploys it in criticism of *mikkyō* (esoteric Buddhism), which he saw as having displaced the centrality of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Tendai after Saichō's time, and whose *mudrā*s and *mantra*s – especially those of the cosmic buddha Dainichi (Skt. Mahāvairocana) and the esoteric deity Butsugen (Skt. Buddhalocanā) – were most commonly used for the *kaigen kuyō* ritual in his day.[58] Elsewhere, Nichiren had criticized the use of *mikkyō* ritual forms in this context, saying, for example, that "in India, China, and Japan, before the *shingon* teachings

were introduced, there were wooden and painted images that walked, preached the Dharma, or talked. But ever since *mudrā*s and *mantra*s have been used to open the eyes of buddha [images], the efficacy of such images has waned considerably."[59] His agenda was in part to deny the efficacy of esoteric *mantra*s while assimilating their putative powers and functions to the *Lotus Sūtra*. In the *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto*, he goes as far as to suggest that esoteric invocations not only are without positive efficacy but actually imbue images with a malignant character:

> Today, when the eye-opening ritual for wooden or painted images is conducted by a *shingon* master, the image becomes not a true buddha, but a provisional one. Indeed, it does not even become a provisional buddha. Though its form may resemble a buddha, its mind merely remains that of the insentient plant or tree from which it was made. In fact, it does not even remain an insentient plant or tree; it becomes a devil or demon. This is because the false doctrines of the *shingon* masters take form in *mudrā*s and *mantra*s and become the mind of the wooden or painted image. . . . Unless the eye-opening ritual for a wooden or painted image is conducted by one who has grasped the heart of the *Lotus Sūtra*, it will be like the case of a thief entering a masterless house or a demon taking possession of the body when someone has died. . . . Because the people are worshiping demons, they will bring the country to ruin in their present lifetime, and because they are revering devils, they will fall after death into the Hell without Respite.[60]

Here again we see an implicit claim that the power of ritual invocations to animate images directly reflects the doctrinal content (in this instance, negatively evaluated) of the teachings on which they are based.

Nichiren then proceeds to address two issues: first, how it is that the Buddha's voice and mind are contained in the *Lotus Sūtra*; second, how it is that, via the sūtra's words, the Buddha's mind can be embodied in an insentient painting or statue. He argues the first point in terms of classical Tiantai/Tendai doctrine of the nonduality of physical and mental dharmas (Jpn. *shiki shin funi*), as follows:

> The written words of the *Lotus Sūtra* manifest the Buddha's pure voice, which is invisible and coextensive, in a form that is both visible and non-coextensive, having both color and form. The pure voice that once vanished finds expression again in changed form as written language, benefiting living beings. . . . Intent finds expression as voice. Intent is mind, and voice is form. . . . Physical dharmas express mental ones. Since form and mind, though nondual, nevertheless have these two aspects, the Buddha's intent took form

> as the written words of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and these written words in turn become the Buddha's intent. Therefore, those who read the *Lotus Sūtra* must not regard it as mere written words, for those written words are precisely the Buddha's mind. . . . Since the *Lotus Sūtra* represents the [Buddha's] mental dharmas, when it is used to consecrate a wooden or painted image having thirty-one marks, that wooden or painted image becomes the whole body of a living buddha. This is what is meant by the realization of buddhahood by grasses and trees.[61]

We have seen similar claims in the *Sōkanmon shō*, which holds that the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* embody the Buddha's true intent, or in the *Kankō ruijū*, which asserts that the written language of the sūtras represents the Buddha's verbal preaching in more durable form. The interchangeability of the Buddha and the *Lotus Sūtra* text also appears in *Kankō ruijū*, which argues from a doctrinal perspective that written characters, being an embodiment of the threefold truth, instantiate the Buddha's presence. The *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto*, dealing as it does with ritual, claims that the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* not only instantiate the Buddha's presence but can also be ritually used to instill that same presence in paintings and statues. Nichiren develops this theme from different perspectives in other writings. For example:

> As for the "eye-opening" ritual to consecrate a buddha image: the *Samantabhadra Sūtra* states, "This Mahāyāna scripture [the *Lotus*] is the treasury of the buddhas, the eye of all buddhas of the ten directions and three periods of time." It also states, "This *vaipulya* sūtra is the eye of the buddhas. It is endowed with the cause by which they obtain the five kinds of vision." The five kinds of vision are the fleshly eye, the *deva* eye, the wisdom eye, the dharma eye, and the buddha eye. One who upholds the *Lotus Sūtra* will naturally be endowed with these five types of vision, just as someone who ascends the throne is naturally obeyed by the entire country. . . . The [same] *Samantabhadra Sūtra* states, "The three kinds of buddha body [the dharma body, recompense body, and manifested body] arise from the *vaipulya*." . . . These teachings of the five eyes and three bodies exist nowhere apart from the *Lotus Sūtra*. The Great Teacher Tiantai [Zhiyi] said: "Throughout the three periods of time, the Buddha consistently possesses three bodies. But in the various teachings [other than the "Fathoming the Lifespan" chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*], this is kept secret and is not transmitted." . . . Thus the offering ritual for opening the eyes of wooden and painted images should be confined to the *Lotus Sūtra* and the Tendai school.[62]

In the above passage, we see that the *Lotus Sūtra* is regarded as the source of buddhas and therefore prior to them. Elsewhere as well, Nichiren suggests that living buddhas, no less than their iconic representations, are empowered or "produced" by the *Lotus Sūtra*:

> The buddha is that which is produced (Jpn. *shoshō*). The *Lotus Sūtra* is that which produces (Jpn. *nōshō*). The buddha is the body, and the *Lotus Sūtra*, the spirit (Jpn. *tamashii*). Thus the eye-opening ritual for wooden and painted images should employ only the *Lotus Sūtra*.[63]

Finally, we see indications that *Lotus* recitation was actually used to consecrate images in Nichiren's community of followers:

> As for consecrating this buddha image [that you have had made], you should quickly have [my disciple, the monk] Iyo-bō carry it out. Have him read the entirety of the *Lotus Sūtra* so that the image will be invested with the Buddha's six sense faculties and become the living teacher Śākyamuni, master of teachings, whom you may revere.[64]

To return to the *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto*, having first addressed the *Lotus Sūtra* as the Buddha's voice and mind, Nichiren moves to his second point, the conceptual basis on which the words of the *Lotus* can be said to endow an inert piece of wood or paper with the Buddha's mind. Nichiren grounded this claim in the Tendai doctrine of "the single thought-moment that is three thousand realms" (Jpn. *ichinen sanzen*) – that is, the interpenetration and mutual identification of the mind at each moment ("single thought-moment") with all dharmas, or the whole of phenomenal reality ("three thousand realms"). This doctrine, originally set forth by the Tiantai founder Zhiyi, was appropriated and innovatively interpreted by Nichiren and holds a central place in his thought.[65] A key structural component of this complex, architectonic concept is the division of all phenomena into three realms (Jpn. *san seken*): the realm of the five aggregates (Skt. *skandhas*), the mental and physical elements into which living beings can be analyzed (Jpn. *go'on seken*); the realm of living beings, i.e. a "temporary union of the five aggregates" considered as an individual being belonging to any of the ten dharma realms from hell to buddhahood (Jpn. *shujō seken*); and the realm of the land, the insentient container world on which living beings depend and which is shaped by their past and present deeds (Jpn. *kokudo seken*). This "realm of the land" is important to Nichiren's thought, in connection with both his aim of establishing the buddha land in the present world – a subject beyond the scope of this chapter – and with the consecration of buddha images. He writes:

> Setting aside the first two, the third, the realm of the land, is the realm of grasses and trees. The realm of grasses and trees includes those plants from which are derived the five pigments used in painting. From these pigments, painted images are made, and from wood, carved statues are produced. It is by the power of the *Lotus Sūtra* that wooden and painted images are infused with a spirit (Jpn. *chinkon to mōsu tamashii o iruru*). This was the insight of the Great Teacher Tiantai [Zhiyi]. With respect to living beings, this doctrine is termed "the realization of buddhahood with this very body," and, with respect to paintings and statues, it is called "the realization of buddhahood by grasses and trees."[66]

Nichiren frequently interpreted the "buddhahood of grasses and trees" as grounded in the concept of *ichinen sanzen*, and legitimating the use of images and *maṇḍala*s in Buddhist practice, for example, in his most famous writing, the *Kanjin honzon shō* (On the contemplation of the mind and the object of worship).[67] However, where that text argues the case strictly on the basis of traditional Tiantai doctrinal concepts of *ichinen sanzen* and the nonduality of sentient and insentient, the reference in the *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto* passage, cited immediately above, to "infusing a spirit" into images suggests resonances with notions of *kami* and other numina that could ritually be made to descend and inhere in *goshintai* or other objects. From this perspective, investigation into the eye-opening ceremony as practiced in medieval Japan may offer some insight into the intersection of Buddhism with local religious culture.

Pacifying the dead: the realization of buddhahood with this very body

Nichiren makes one further point about the power of the language of the *Lotus Sūtra*, as the embodiment of the Buddha's liberative intent, to animate insentient objects. Unlike the issue of consecrating buddha images, discussed in several of his writings, this one appears only in *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto* and is related to larger assumptions about the powers of sacred language to bridge the gap between this world and the next. The passage in question continues without interruption from the discussion of consecrating buddha images and goes as follows:

> When someone dies and his spirit (Jpn. *tamashii*) departs, demons may enter his body in its place and destroy his descendants. This is what is meant by a hungry ghost (Skt. *preta*, Jpn. *gaki*) that devours [even] itself. If a person of wisdom praises the *Lotus Sūtra* and with it imbues the dead person's remains (Jpn. *hone no tamashii to naseba*), then although that person's body remains in human form, his mind

> will become the Dharma body. This is the doctrine of attaining [the stage of] acquiescence [to the unbornness of the dharmas] in one's present body (Jpn. *shōshin tokunin*). . . . If a person of wisdom awakened to the *Lotus* performs offerings over the remains, then the dead person's body will at once become the Dharma body. This is the meaning of "with this very body" (Jpn. *sokushin*). [The officiant] will retrieve the departed spirit, place it back in the remains, and transform it into the Buddha's mind. This is the meaning of "realizing buddhahood" (Jpn. *jōbutsu*). "This very body" refers to physical dharmas, and "realizing buddhahood," to mental dharmas. The dead person's body and mind will be transformed into the beginningless subtle object and subtle wisdom (Jpn. *mushi no myōkyō myōchi*); this is the realization of buddhahood in this very body. Thus the *Lotus Sūtra* speaks of "the suchlike aspect of the dharmas (the dead person's physical body), their suchlike nature (his mind), their suchlike essence (his body and mind)," etc.[68]

Like the preceding discussion of instilling "mind" into insentient images, this passage provides an explicit rationale, assimilated in this case to the *Lotus Sūtra*, of a practice that was widely conducted, although without much theoretical explanation. This was the incantations of a *zenchishiki* (a Buddhist teacher or spiritual guide) at the bedside of a dying or newly dead person for that individual's postmortem benefit. Deathbed ritual texts (Jpn. *rinjū gyōgisho*) of the Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura periods, such as the *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* of Kakuban (1095–1143) or the *Kanbyō yōjin shō* of Ryōchū (1199–1287), make clear that when dying persons have fallen unconscious and can no longer chant for themselves, or even when they have ceased to breathe, the power of the *zenchishiki*'s chanted *nenbutsu* or other invocations can redirect a dying or deceased person's consciousness, which may be wandering in the interim state, causing it to achieve birth in the Pure Land.[69] The expression "*sokushin jōbutsu*" might seem odd in connection with the deceased; what, after all, does the realization of buddhahood with this very body entail, if the body in question is a corpse? But such usage was far from uncommon in referring to someone who had died in a state of great spiritual attainment. Instructions for deathbed practice in the Shingon tradition, for example, speak of the awakening to be realized at the moment of death in terms of *sokushin jōbutsu*.[70]

Some contemporary readers might see this passage as exhibiting an uneasy conflation of standard Mahāyāna nonduality thought, expressed in a Tendai idiom, with elements of a local religious culture involving shamanism and spirit possession. However, the sort of correlations drawn here by a logic of association and resemblance (the corpse = "this very body"; the spirit = "realizing buddhahood") was probably not only unproblematic for medieval Japanese Buddhists but represented a widespread episteme in which

Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements could be associated, equated, and explained in terms of one another.

Summation

Here we have reviewed some medieval arguments about the powers of language, specifically the language of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Being articulated in sectarian, polemical contexts, these arguments provide explicit theoretical bases for more general ideas about the soteriological functions of language that may often have gone unarticulated. Often they adapt the traditional scholastic device of the *kyōhan*, using the hierarchical categories of such schema to rank, not only specific teachings, but also views of language.

We have seen in these arguments a clear presumption of what in modern literary critical terms might be called "authorial intent." The Buddha's will to lead all beings to liberation is somehow fixed in the words of the sūtra text – freeze-dried, as it were – and can be reactivated either discursively (by "rousing the beings into the waking reality of original enlightenment"), or ritually, such as by empowering buddha images or saving the deceased. Some disagreement is in evidence about the ontological status of a sūtra's words themselves. The *Kankō ruijū*, for example, claims that written words actually instantiate the Buddha of original enlightenment. In contrast, the *Sōkanmon shō* indicates that, while the words of the *Lotus Sūtra* have the soteriological function of awakening people to original enlightenment, in themselves they still ultimately belong to the "dream of birth and death" ("waking reality" in this work would appear to be a non-discursive realm). In its extreme development, this latter view took the form of claims to a separate Tendai transmission prior to and apart from the sūtra and commentarial tradition, a transmission originating "where heaven and earth have not yet divided, where delusion and enlightenment are a single suchness." In this case, as we have seen, an argument explicitly about language might implicitly be also about lineage and institution; as Ono Bunkō has suggested, assertions about a separate "Tendai-shū" independent of and superior to written texts seems to have served Tendai scholars in the Kantō provinces, especially those of the Senba *dangisho*, at least in part as a polemical tool for asserting a unique sectarian identity over and against both their Tendai counterparts on Mt. Hiei and their Nichiren Hokke-shū rivals closer to home.

In contrast to these doctrinal or philosophical discussions of "words and letters," the ritual efficacy of language is addressed in Nichiren's claims for the power of the *Lotus Sūtra* to endow insentient beings with "mind" – both to empower buddha images and to bring the deceased to enlightenment. Unlike the story of the contest between Kōshō and Hōren mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Nichiren's *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto* is not simply an assertion that one sūtra has greater thaumaturgical power than

others. Instead, his claims for the unique ritual efficacy of the *Lotus Sūtra* are directly connected with its place in the traditional Tendai *kyōhan* (classifications of teachings), which, based on an assessment of its discursive content, rank the *Lotus Sūtra* as the supreme teaching of the Buddha's lifetime. There is a seamless continuum here between the sūtra's doctrinal content and the presumption of its magical powers; because (according to the Tendai tradition) only the *Lotus* teaches the unity of the three *tathāgata* bodies, its ritual use alone can transform an inert image into a living buddha. Although Nichiren is only one figure and not necessarily altogether representative of his age, his argument at least suggests the possibility that our own frequent distinction between discursive and magical uses of language either did not exist or was framed in very different terms in the medieval period. This in turn is related to the broader questions of the relationship, in pre-modern Japan, between exoteric and esoteric teachings, and between doctrine and ritual practice.

Notes

1 Gregory Schopen, "The Phrase '*sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet*' in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 17/3–4 (1975), 147–181. For the *sūtra* quotes, see *Miaofa lianhua jing* 4, T. no. 262, 9:34b12, 31b26–29, Leon Hurvitz, tr., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976, pp. 193, 178.

2 Ch. *Zuishengwang jing*, Jpn. *Saishōō-kyō*, T. no. 665.

3 *Dai Nihonkoku Hokkekyō kenki* II:48, in *Ōjōden-Hokke genki*, *Zoku Nihon bukkyō no shisō* 1, new edition of the 1974 *Nihon shisō taikei* 7, Inoue Mitsusada and Oosone Shōsuke, eds, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995, pp. 114–116; Yoshiko Kurata Dykstra, tr., *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sūtra from Ancient Japan*, Hirakata-shi, Osaka-fu: Intercultural Research Institute, Kansai University of Foreign Studies, 1983, pp. 74–76.

4 Paul Groner, "Shortening the Path: Early Tendai Interpretations of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body (*Sokushin Jōbutsu*)," in *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, Robert E. Buswell Jr and Robert M. Gimello, eds, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, pp. 439–473.

5 These are explained in the *Mohezhiguan* 1a, T. no. 1911, 46:10b7–11a13; Neal Donner and Daniel B. Stevenson, trs, *The Great Calming and Contemplation: A Study and Annotated Translation of the First Chapter of Chih-i's Mo-ho chih-kuan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, pp. 207–18.

6 This has been noted, for example, by Sueki Fumihiko, *Kamakura bukkyō keisei ron: Shisōshi no tachiba kara*, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998, pp. 279–300 *passim*. Sueki refers to the two views respectively as "mind as absolute principle" (Jpn. *zettai no shinteki genri*) and the "affirmation of phenomena, just as they are, as absolute" (Jpn. *genshoku soku zettai no "ari no mama shugi"*).

7 The earliest reference to the *Sōkanmon shō* appears in the *Honzon shōgyōroku*, an index of Nichiren's works compiled by a disciple in 1344, sixty-two years after his death. *Shōwa teihon Nichiren shōnin ibun* [hereafter *Teihon*], Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, ed., Minobu, Yamanashi Prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1952–1959; rev. 1988, 3:2738. This notice occurs too early to dismiss the

possibility of Nichiren's authorship out of hand, but also too late to accept it uncritically. The Japanese scholarship on the authenticity question is summarized in Jacqueline I. Stone, "Some Disputed Writings in the Nichiren Corpus: Textual, Hermeneutical and Historical Problems," PhD dissertation, UCLA, 1990, pp. 125–135. (An additional reference, unknown to me at the time of that writing, is Hanano Jūdō, "Sōkanmon shō no shingi mondai ni tsuite," *Watō*, 37 (1976), 108–136, which argues for Nichiren's authorship.) A full translation of the *Sōkanmon shō* is included in Stone, pp. 343–417. Translated excerpts have been published in *Buddhism in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez Jr, ed., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 232–236. Arguments for or against the authenticity of specific works attributed to Nichiren dealing with the doctrine of original enlightenment are often based as much on prejudgments about Nichiren's thought as they are on textual problems. Where a holograph is lacking, it is often impossible, at least in the current state of scholarship, to draw definite conclusions. On questions of authenticity in Nichiren's writings more generally, in addition to my "Some Disputed Writings," see Sueki Fumihiko, "Nichiren's Problematic Works," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 26/3–4 (1999), 261–280.

8 On traditional Tiantai classificatory schema, see Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii, tr., *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism: An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings*, David W. Chappell, ed. and comp. Masao Ichishima, Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1983.

9 *Teihon* 2:1686–1687.

10 Ibid., pp. 1688–1689.

11 Ibid., p. 1688.

12 Ibid., p. 1690.

13 Ibid., p. 1692.

14 Ibid., p. 1689.

15 Although it praises the Buddha's "skillful means" in elaborating countless verbal teachings to lead living beings to enlightenment, in that it never articulates the content of the One Vehicle, the *Lotus Sūtra* itself could be read as acknowledging that all categories are ultimately empty, and the Buddha's awakening is beyond verbal expression. For an example of such a reading, see Michael Pye, *Skilful Means: A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism*, London: Duckworth, 1978.

16 For example, in this excerpt from the *Sanjū shika no kotogaki*: "From the standpoint of nonduality, there is no hierarchy whatsoever among the three truths, because one truth encompasses three truths, and the three truths are implicit in one. But from the standpoint of duality, the truth of conventional existence is superior, while those of emptiness and the middle are inferior. The truth of conventional existence is the realm before our eyes, the myriad phenomena, the body of what is originally unborn. . . . Emptiness and the middle are the adornments of conventional existence." Tada Kōryū et al., eds, *Tendai hongaku ron* [hereafter THR], *Nihon shisō taikei* 9, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973, p. 177.

17 Fascicles 1 and 4 are included in THR, pp. 188–286. The complete text may be found in Bussho Kankōkai, ed., *Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho* (hereafter DNBZ), Tokyo: by the editor, 1912–1922, 17:1–114. For discussion, see Paul Groner, "A Medieval Japanese Reading of the *Mo-ho chih-kuan*: Placing the *Kankō ruijū* in Historical Context," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 23/1–2 (1995), 49–81.

18 Literally "six dusts." As the editor notes, in the *sahā* world, the Buddha's preaching can really be the object of only three sense faculties: the ears, the eyes, and the mind (THR, 201). (One can also imagine a braille version of a *sūtra* text, which could be accessed by touch.) This limitation was not necessarily assumed to hold true in other worlds, however; for example, the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-Sūtra*

depicts a world called *Sarvagandhasugandh-ā*, whose Buddha teaches non-discursively, by means of fragrances. Robert A. F. Thurman, tr., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976, pp. 78, 81.

19 THR, 201–202. This passage appears to be balancing or qualifying a preceding one, to the effect that, while persons of superior faculties need only hear that "all dharmas are the Buddha-Dharma" to realize enlightenment, those of lesser faculties do so by reliance on the scriptural rolls (THR, 200). Some other medieval Tendai texts similarly suggest that the greater one's faculties, the less exposure to written texts necessary to engender awakening, e.g. persons of superior faculties can realize enlightenment merely by encountering the preface to the *Mohezhiguan*; those of intermediate faculties, by the "*Dayi*" or "Synopsis" chapter; and those of inferior faculties, by all ten chapters of the work. Tendai Shūten Kankōkai, ed., *Eshin-ryū naishō sōjō hōmon shū* [a.k.a. and hereafter *Ichijō shō*], *Tendaishū zensho*, 1935–1937; reprint, Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1973–1974, 9:35b.

20 THR, pp. 207–208. *Moji* has been variously translated in this chapter as written words, written characters, words and letters, etc.

21 *Mohezhiguan* 5a, T. 46:52b, mentions these as two types of persons unable to fathom the ten modes of contemplation. It is likely, however, that the *Kankō ruijū*'s compiler had a contemporaneous target of criticism in mind, such as Zen or Zen-like claims to wordless transmission. See the following section.

22 THR, pp. 207–208. The *Denbōketsu*, probably a fictive work, would seem to refer to a record of oral transmissions that Saichō received from his Tiantai teachers in China.

23 On this point, see Neal Donner, "Sudden and Gradual Intimately Conjoined: Chih-i's T'ien-t'ai View," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987, pp. 201–226.

24 See Hayashi Senshō, "*Shikan shō Hokke* shisō to Senba kyōgaku: Chūko Tendai to Nichiren kyōgaku to no kankei no issetsu," in Shimizu Ryūzan Sensei Kyōiku Gojūnen Koki Kinenkai, ed., *Shimizu Ryūzan Sensei koki kinen ronbunshū*, Tokyo: by the editor, 1940, pp. 230–261.

25 For a more detailed discussion of the *shijū kōhai*, along with a summary of arguments in Japanese scholarship concerning its origins, see Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp. 168–175, and, more recently, Hanano Jūdō, "Shijū kōhai shisō no keisei," in Watanabe Hōyō Sensei Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai, ed., *Hokke bukkyō bunkashi ronsō*, Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 2003, pp. 201–224.

26 As Donner and Stevenson have noted, as used by Zhiyi, the term z*higuan* (Jpn. *shikan*) can be understood in three ways. From the standpoint of cause, or practice, it can be understood as "calming and contemplation"; from the standpoint of effect, or attainment, as "tranquility and insight" (or "stillness and clarity"); and, when referring to the true nature of reality, as "quiescence and illumination." Donner and Stevenson, p. 8. The same is true of *kanjin*. Rather than make a choice in each case (which cannot always readily be done), I have somewhat arbitrarily rendered *shikan* here as "calming and contemplation," in accordance with the title of the Donner–Stevenson translation, and *kanjin* as "contemplation of the mind." In medieval Tendai texts, however, both terms are often used simply to refer to original enlightenment.

27 See Take Kakuchō, "Eizan, Mii to Nichiren monka to no kōryū: Shijū kōhai han no seiritsu o megutte," in Asai Endō, ed., *Hongaku shisō no genryū to tenkai*,

Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1991, pp. 408–409. The "contemplation of actuality" is discussed in Shimaji Daitō, *Nihon bukkyō kyōgakushi*, Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō, 1933; reprint, 1976), pp. 502–503, and Hazama Jikō, *Chūko Nihon Tendai no kenkyū*, vol. 2 of his *Nihon bukkyō no kaiten to sono kichō* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1948; reprint 1974), pp. 203–204.

28 The term "innate and self-luminous" is taken from Guanding's preface to the *Mohezhiguan*, where it is used to suggest that Zhiyi's wisdom was transcendent and not acquired through a teacher (T. 46:1a12). Donner and Stevenson translate it as "heavenly light of truth." Donner and Stevenson, p. 100.

29 On *kanjin* as a hermeneutical style, see Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 156–167. *Kanjin* is also an important category in Nichiren's thought, where it indicates manifesting innate buddhahood by chanting the *daimoku* or title of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Ibid., pp. 265–266.

30 *Mongu ryaku taikō shikenmon* 1, DNBZ 18:4a–b.

31 Hokke-shū in this case would mean not the Nichiren Hokke-shū, but the textual transmission of Tendai.

32 *Ichijō shō*, 9:40b. The reference to calming and contemplation as what Zhiyi "practiced within in his own mind" (Jpn. *koshinchū shogyō*) is taken from Guanding's introduction to the *Mohezhiguan* (T. 46:1b13). Somewhat ironically – in view of how this phrase was used by proponents of a "Tendai-shū" transmitted independently of the *sūtra* and commentarial tradition – Zhanran's commentary explicitly warns that it should not be taken as pointing to a separate transmission of mind essentials independent of inherited Tiantai texts. *Zhiguan fuxing chuanhong jue* 1a, T. no. 1912, 46:147b19–29; trans. in Donner and Stevenson, pp. 104–105, n. 39.

33 *Ichiryū sōden hōmonkenmon* (a.k.a. and hereafter *Nijōshō kenmon*) 3, *Tendaishū zensho* 9:249a–b. The thrust of both this passage and the one cited from Sonshun's *Maka shikan kenmon tenchū* in n. 37 below are at odds with the passage cited from his *Mongu ryaku taikō shikenmon* in n. 29 above, which valorizes written language. Since all three works include Sonshun's compilations of earlier transmissions, further study is necessary in order to determine which position represents his own view, or whether his views may have altered according to time and context.

34 For this element in Zhiyi's biography, see *Sui Tiantai Zhizhe Dashi biezhuan*, T. no. 2050, 50:191c22, and also Xu gaoseng zhuan 17, T. no. 2060, 50:564b15–16. Taira Ryōshō discusses the tradition that Huisi and Zhiyi heard Śākyamuni's direct preaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* on Sacred Vulture Peak in "Ryōzen dōchō ni tsuite," *Tendai gakuhō*, 14 (1971), 1–11. For Saichō's placement of these two patriarchs as auditors on Vulture Peak in his Tendai Hokke-shū and precept lineages, see *Naishō buppō sōjō kechimyakufu*, *Dengyō Daishi zenshū*, Hiezan Senshūin, ed., Tokyo: Sekai Seiten Kankō Kyōkai, 1989, 1:225, 232. For discussion, see Shioiri Ryōchū, "Dengyō Daishi no hongaku shisō: Busshinron o chūshin toshite," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* (hereafter *IBK*), 9/1 (1961), 22–27.

35 See Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 102–103. The phrase *Ryōzen ichie gennen misan* is central to the symbolism of a number of medieval Tendai initiation rituals and has roots in the little studied area of Tendai–Zen interactions. The phrase first occurs in the recorded teachings of the Chan master Dahui (1098–1163), where it refers to the sublimity of Zhiyi's enlightenment (see, for example, Dahui Pujiao Chanshi yulu 23, T. no. 1998, 47:907a23–24). Its first appearance in a Japanese text is Eisai's Kōzen gokoku ron 2, T. no. 2543, 80:9a25–26.

36 Shimaji Daitō, *Nihon bukkyō kyōgakushi*, Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō, 1933, pp. 500–501; Yamakawa Chiō, "Risshōkan jō ni taisuru gigi ni tsuite," *Seishin*,

24 (1938), 39–40; and Tamura Yoshirō, "Nihon Tendai hongaku shisō no keisei katei: Toku ni Sōchō Zen to no kanren ni tsuite," *IBK*, 10/2 (1962), 661–672.

37 According to the *Genkō shakusho* compiled in 1322, Enni had taught "the singular transmission of the buddhas and patriarchs" to Jōmyō (DNBZ 101:218b–19a). The relevant passage is translated in Groner, p. 54. Sonshun's *Maka shikan kenmon tenchū* 1a also claims a connection between the two (DNBZ 29:26a).

38 *Maka shikan kenmon tenchū* 1b, DNBZ 29:122b.

39 *Dainichikyō kenmon* 1, *Nihon daizōkyō* 14:69a.

40 *Risshōkan jō*, *Teihon* 1:844, 846, 849. For a translation of the entire text, see "A Treatise on Establishing the Right Way of Meditation," in *Writings of Nichiren Shōnin*, *Doctrine* 2, Kyōtsū Hori, comp., George Tanabe Jr, ed., Tokyo: Nichirenshū Overseas Propagation Promotion Association, 2002, pp. 218–233.

41 For example: "[Patriarchal Zen] speaks of transmitting something apart from the teachings. But apart from the teachings there are no principles, and apart from principles there are no teachings. Don't you understand the logic of this, that principles are none other than teachings and teachings are none other than principles? This talk about the twirled flower, the faint smile, and something being entrusted to Mahakashyapa is in itself a teaching, and the four-character phrase about its being 'independent of words or writing' is likewise a teaching and a statement in words. . . . Even the followers of Zen, who advocate these views, themselves make use of words when instructing others. In addition, when one is trying to convey an understanding of the Buddha way, one cannot communicate the meaning if one sets aside words and phrases. Bodhidharma came to China from the west, pointed directly to people's minds, and declared that those minds were Buddha. But this principle is enunciated in various places even in the provisional Mahayana *sūtra*s that preceded the *Lotus Sūtra*. . . . To treat it as such a rare and wonderful thing is too ridiculous for words. Alas, how can the people of our time be so distorted in their thinking! They should put their faith in the words of truth spoken by the Thus Come One of perfect enlightenment and complete reward." *Shōgu mondo shō*, *Teihon* 1:371–72; trans. from *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, The Gosho Translation Committee, ed. and tr., Tokyo: Sōka Gakkai, 1999, pp. 117–118.

42 However, subsequent references do not appear until the early decades of the fourteenth century. For this reason, several scholars have argued that the *Risshōkan jō* may be an apocryphon produced by a later disciple. See, for example, Asai Yōrin, *Nichiren Shōnin kyōgaku no kenkyū*, Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1945; reprint, 1980), pp. 197–202; Hayashi, pp. 230–261; and Take, pp. 417–418. Its authenticity is upheld by Yamakawa, and Hanano Jūdō, "*Nihon chūko Tendai bunken no kōsatsu* (2): *Risshōkan jō* no shingi mondai ni tsuite," *IBK*, 25/2 (1977), 830–835. Three early transcriptions exist, two made by Daishin Ajari Nisshin (1271–1346) of the Minobu lineage in 1325 and 1330 and another by Nitchō of the Fuji lineage in 1364. Given the tensions between the two lineages at that time, Hanano argues that, had Nisshin actually authored the *Risshōkan jō* (as Take, for one, has suggested), no Fuji scholar would have been given access to copy it; thus the existence of Nitchō's transcription argues that the work already existed from an earlier period.

43 *Zōda shō*, *Tendaishū zensho* 9:75b.

44 *Mongu ryaku taikō shikenmon* 3, DNBZ 18:106–107.

45 *Nijōshō kenmon* 2, *Tendaishū zensho* 9:207a.

46 The Eshin and Danna schools represent the two major lineages of medieval Tendai. The *Risshōkan jō sōjō*, attributed to Nichiren, also represents the Danna school as rejecting the position that calming and contemplation surpasses the

trace and origin teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Teihon* 1:870). The *Tendai meisho guketsu shō* similarly suggests a division between Danna and Eshin schools on this point (DNBZ 18:268b–70a). Ono Bunkō suggests that the term "Danna" in these texts may not necessarily refer to actual Danna lineages but rather indicates those Tendai scholars who favored a more textually based approach over an extreme emphasis on *kanjin*. "Senba to Nichiren monka to no kōryū: 'Kantō Tendai' to Kantō Nichiren kyōdan," in *Hongaku shisō no genryū to tenkai*, Asai Endō, ed., Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1991, pp. 445–446.

47 *Gosho shō* (Kyoto: Honmanji, 1976), 2:1580.

48 Cited in Hayashi, pp. 242–243. See also Ono, pp. 437–444.

49 *Jūni innen shō*, *Nichirenshū shūgaku zensho*, Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, ed., Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1968–1978, 1:302–303.

50 *Kanjin honzon shō shikenmon*, cited in Ono, p. 435.

51 Cf. Ono. This possibility has also been noted by Take, p. 418.

52 Ogami Kanchō, "Kantō no Tendai dangisho (1): Senba dangisho o chūshin toshite," *Kanazawa Bunko kenkyū*, 167 (1970), 3.

53 On the *daimoku*, see Jacqueline I. Stone, "Chanting the August Title of the *Lotus Sūtra*: *Daimoku* Practices in Classical and Medieval Japan," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, Richard K. Payne, ed., Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998, pp. 116–166, and Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 267–272. Precedents for Nichiren's *daimoku* in Tendai esoteric ritual have also been investigated by Lucia Dolce, "Esoteric Patterns in Nichiren's Interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*," PhD diss., University of Leiden, 2002, pp. 294–315.

54 On Nichiren's *maṇḍala*, see Lucia Dolce, "Criticism and Appropriation: Nichiren's Attitude toward Esoteric Buddhism," *Japanese Journal of Religions Studies*, 26/3–4 (1999), esp. 364–374, and Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 274–288. See also Dolce's more detailed discussion of the esoteric basis of Nichiren's *maṇḍala* in "Esoteric Patterns," pp. 103–349.

55 *Teihon* 1:791–794. While Nichiren's authorship is well established, the exact date of this work is uncertain. *Teihon* gives it as 1273, though 1264, 1274, and even 1282 have also been suggested. See *Nichiren Shōnin ibun jiten*, Risshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, ed., Minobu, Yamanashi Prefecture: Minobusan Kuonji, 1985, p. 1127a–c.

56 *Brahmasvara* means "pure voice" and also serves to liken the Buddha's voice to that of Great Heavenly Brahmā, said to resound throughout the ten directions. The Sōka Gakkai translation of this writing uses "pure and far-reaching voice" to convey both connotations. Cf. "Opening the Eyes of Wooden and Painted Images," *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, pp. 85–90, which I have consulted in translating passages from this work.

57 *Teihon* 1:792. The extended and prajñā periods are categories within a five-period division of the Buddha's teaching career. The distinct and perfect teachings are two divisions within a classification system known as the "four teachings of conversion" (Ch. *huafa sijiao*, Jpn. *kehō no shikyō*). On these and other Tiantai classification schema, see Chappell and Ichishima.

58 Nichiren notes the use of these particular *mantra*s for consecrating images in *Mokue nizō kaigen no koto* (*Teihon* 1:791) and in other writings. For example, "When it comes to consecrating buddha images, all eight sects alike employ the *mudrā*s and *mantra*s of Dainichi and Butsugen [Buddha Eye]" (*Senji shō*, *Teihon* 2:1044). Hōnen (1133–1212) also says that, after the artist has painted in the eyes of an image (Jpn. *ji no kaigen*), "by means of the Buddha Eye *mantra*, a monk opens the eyes, and with the *mantra* of Dainichi, he completes [in it] all the Buddha's merits" (Jpn. *ri no kaigen*). *Ippyaku shijū gokajō mondō*, *Jōdoshū zensho*,

Jōdoshū Shūten Kankōkai, ed., Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1970–1972, 9:586a. The esoteric deity Butsugen, or Butsugen Butsumo (Buddha Eye Buddha Mother), is regarded as mother of buddhas and personifies the buddha "eye" or wisdom.

59 *Senji shō*, *Teihon* 2:1044. The word *shingon* in Nichiren's work, transliterated here with a small "s," often refers not only to the Shingon sectarian tradition but to esoteric Buddhism in general, including both Tōmitsu and Taimitsu.

60 *Teihon* 1:793.

61 Ibid., 1:792. The equation of the written words of the *Lotus Sūtra* with the voice of the living Buddha and with his soteriological intent was an important theme for Nichiren. For example, "The so-called pure voice is foremost among the Buddha's distinguishing marks. Minor kings, great kings and cakravartins all possess it in some degree. Thus by a single word of the king, a county can be either destroyed or governed peaceably. Imperial edicts represent a portion of the pure voice. All the talk of ordinary people cannot equal a single word of the ruler. . . . The governance of this small country, the fact that Great Brahmā is obeyed by the beings of the threefold world, and the fact that Great Brahmā and Indra both obey the Buddha is due to the power of the pure voice. This pure voice became the *sūtra*s and thus benefits all living beings. And among the *sūtra*s, it is the *Lotus Sūtra* in particular that gives expression, in the form of written words, to Śākyamuni Tathāgata's will. Its characters are endowed with the Buddha's mind. Seeds, sprouts, mature plants, and rice all have different forms, but their essence (Jpn. *kokoro*) does not differ. Śākyamuni Buddha and the written words of the *Lotus Sūtra* are different [in appearance], but their mind (Jpn. *kokoro*) is the same. So when you behold the written words of the *Lotus Sūtra*, you should think that you are encountering the living Śākyamuni Tathāgata." "Shijō Kingo-dono gohenji," *Teihon* 1:666.

62 "Shijō Kingo Shakabutsu kuyōji," *Teihon* 2:1182–1183.

63 *Honzon mondō shō*, *Teihon* 2:1575.

64 "Mama Shakabutsu gokuyō oijō," *Teihon* 1:457.

65 For a detailed and accessible explanation of this doctrine, see Kanno Hiroshi, *Ichinen sanzen to wa nani ka*, Tokyo: Daisan Bunmeisha, 1992. For overviews of its role in Nichiren's thought, see Asai Endō, "Nichiren's View of Humanity: The Final Dharma Age and the Three Thousand Realms in One Thought Moment," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 26/3–4 (1999), 239–259, and Stone, *Original Enlightenment*, pp. 263–288, *passim*.

66 "Shijō Kingo Shakabutsu kuyōji," *Teihon* 2:1183.

67 "Both inner and outer writings permit the use of wooden and painted images as objects of worship, but the reason for this has emerged [only] from the Tiantai school. If plants and trees did not possess cause and effect [i.e. the nine realms and the buddha realm] in both physical and mental aspects, it would be useless to rely on wooden and painted images as objects of worship. . . . Were it not for the buddha-seed which is the three thousand realms in one thought-moment, the realization of buddhahood by sentient beings and [the efficacy of] wooden and painted images as objects of worship would exist in name but not in reality." *Kanjin honzon shō*, *Teihon* 1:703 and 711.

68 *Teihon* 1:793–794. The famous *Lotus Sūtra* passage setting forth the "true aspect of the dharmas" in terms of the ten "suchlikes" is at T. 9:5c11–13.

69 See Kakuban's *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, which stresses the benefit of the *zenchishiki*'s chanting at the deathbed on behalf of a dying person who is unconscious or of someone who has just died. Articles 8 and 9, *Kōgyō Daishi zenshū*, Tomita Kōjun, ed., 1935, reprint, Tokyo: Hōsenji, 1977, 2:1216–1219. Ryōchū also urges the *zenchishiki* to chant at the bedside of unconscious persons and

continue chanting for two to four hours after the breath has ceased, all the while transferring the merit of their *nenbutsu* to the dead person with the intent that, "by its virtue, [the deceased] will achieve *ōjō*, even from the interim state." *Kanbyō yōjin*, reproduced in *Nihon Jōdokyō bunkashi kenkyū*, Itō Shintetsu, Tokyo: Ryūbunkan, 1975, articles 17, 18, and 19, pp. 455–456.

70 See, for example, *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, article 7, *Kōgyō Daishi zenshū* 2:1214. In the early modern period, successful cases of ascetic "self-mummification" were also spoken of as instances of *sokushin jōbutsu*. See Hori Ichirō, "Self-Mummified Buddhas in Japan: An Aspect of the Shugen-dō ('Mountain Asceticism') Sect," *History of Religions*, 1/2 (1962), 222–242.

10

THE *LOTUS SŪTRA* AS A SOURCE FOR DŌGEN'S DISCOURSE STYLE

Taigen Dan Leighton

Zen Master Dōgen used the *Lotus Sūtra* in a variety of different ways. It is the aim of this chapter to demonstrate how this appropriation is expressed in his rhetorical style. Dōgen quotes the *Lotus Sūtra* (from the Kumārajīva version) far more than any other sūtra.[1] This might seem reasonably expectable, since Dōgen was first ordained as a monk in the Tendai school, which continued to see the *Lotus* as the pre-eminent sūtra, even as it incorporated and attempted to synthesize a whole range of Buddhist teachings. However, while prominent Kamakura innovators Eisai, Dōgen, Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren had all been Tendai monks, they vary greatly in their subsequent application of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The *Lotus* is the fundamental object of devotion for Nichiren, but is scarcely mentioned explicitly by Shinran, although it may be discerned as part of the background of Shin thought.

The situation of Dōgen's use of the *Lotus Sūtra* in his teachings is more complex. The *Lotus* has been commonly perceived as tangential to Dōgen, and to Japanese Sōtō Zen generally. For example, in discussing another great Sōtō literary figure from the eighteenth century, Ryōkan, who also favored the *Lotus Sūtra*, Ryūichi Abé says, "Although Ryōkan appears to have remained faithful to the religious ideals of his Sōtō progenitor Dōgen, there was nothing sectarian about Ryōkan's Buddhist practice. Among the numerous Buddhist scriptures, the *Lotus Sūtra* – a popular text not particularly emphasized in traditional Sōtō training but the essential scripture of the Tendai and Nichiren schools – was by far his favorite."[2] While the *Lotus* is certainly not nearly as important to Dōgen or Sōtō as it is to Nichiren, Ryōkan's great appreciation for it reveals the lingering appropriation of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Sōtō, an appreciation and usage that does go back to the founder of Japanese Sōtō.

Dōgen widely cites and interprets many doctrinal elements from the *Lotus Sūtra* in his teachings. Along with his many direct allusions to the parables

from the sūtra, Dōgen frequently refers to specific *Lotus* teachings. Examples are skillful means (Jpn. *hōben*); the single cause for buddhas appearing in the world, i.e. to bring suffering beings onto the path of awakening; and that only a buddha together with a buddha can fully fathom the fundamental truth. While these teachings are not completely unique to the *Lotus* among Mahāyāna sūtras, Dōgen discusses them using direct quotes from the *Lotus Sūtra*. Dōgen also often discusses or critiques teachings commonly linked to the *Lotus Sūtra* in Heian and Kamakura Buddhism, such as the importance of fundamental enlightenment (Jpn. *hongaku*); and realization of buddhahood in this very body (Jpn. *sokushin jōbutsu*).[3] Dōgen's use of the *Lotus Sūtra* text is necessarily affected by the contemporary readings of the *Lotus* in Tendai and other Japanese understandings, a complex subject beyond the scope of this chapter.

A discussion of all the numerous direct references to the *Lotus Sūtra* in Dōgen's writings is also far beyond the scope of this chapter. But to mention briefly one of the most prominent examples, in his *Shōbōgenzō* essay *Hokke-Ten-Hokke* (*The Lotus Dharma Turns the Lotus Dharma*), Dōgen discusses and elaborates his view of the liberative reality of the phenomenal world, which Dōgen interprets as a primary teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Dōgen expresses this interpretation in various ways. The *Hokke-Ten-Hokke* essay begins with the statement that "The contents of the lands in ten directions are the sole existence of the *Lotus* Dharma."[4] In various writings, Dōgen creatively reads and interprets parts of the *Lotus Sūtra* such as the stories in chapters fifteen and sixteen about the underground bodhisattvas immanently present and available for the world, and the inconceivable lifespan and continuing presence in the world of Śākyamuni Buddha. These are among the *Lotus Sūtra* supports for Dōgen's teaching about the active agency of the phenomenal world in the process and practice of Buddhist awakening. This interpretation and appropriation of the *Lotus* teaching as essentially immanent and located in the phenomenal world is not only important to Dōgen's philosophy, but also relevant to Dōgen's style of expression, as described in what follows in this chapter.

In line with Dōgen's many references, the *Lotus Sūtra* also retains a significant place in Sōtō liturgy, albeit far less central than in Nichiren Buddhism. Even today in many Japanese Sōtō Zen temples, the verse endings to the sūtra's chapter sixteen on "The Buddha's Inconceivable Lifespan" (*Juryōhonge*), or to chapter twenty-five on "Kannon Bodhisattva" (*Fumonbonge*), are chanted daily. But instead of the sūtra's doctrinal or liturgical applications, I limit the scope of this chapter to examining some of the ways in which Dōgen's style of discourse and rhetoric, as seen in his *Eihei Kōroku* as well as in *Shōbōgenzō*, resonate with his interpretations of aspects of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

My point is not at all to claim that the *Lotus Sūtra* is the single most important source for Dōgen; obviously there are many traditions from which

Dōgen borrows. Much of the Chinese Chan tradition is the central lexicon for Dōgen, especially the classical *kōan* literature, as well as closer *Caodong* lineage forebears such as Hongzhi Zhengjue and Tiantong Rujing. In *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition*, Steven Heine has masterfully demonstrated how Dōgen's writings serve to develop and elaborate the *kōan* genre.[5] Dōgen also makes ample use of the Japanese poetic tradition, as invoked in Yasunari Kawabata's appreciation of Dōgen as a poet in Kawabata's 1968 Nobel Prize acceptance speech. Dōgen's indebtedness to this poetic tradition has been further traced in Heine's *The Zen Poetry of Dōgen*.[6] Dōgen certainly further appropriated the Chinese monastic tradition as a major basis for his praxis and training program.[7] But Dōgen's utilization of Mahāyāna discourse, especially as developed in the *Lotus*, should also be considered as one of the fundamental backgrounds for viewing Dōgen's teaching as a whole.

I believe that further inquiries into various aspects of their interrelationship will be illuminating to both Dōgen and *Lotus Sūtra* studies. But this present chapter focuses on Dōgen's borrowing aspects of its rhetorical style, based on his own interpretation of the *Lotus*. The chapter proceeds with a discussion of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s style of proclamatory rhetoric.

The self-referential *Lotus*

The *Lotus Sūtra* itself frequently emphasizes the importance and rewards of reading, copying, and reciting the *Lotus Sūtra*. To be sure, other Mahāyāna sūtras talk about the merit to be derived by recalling or copying the sūtra being read.[8] However, the *Lotus Sūtra* at times seems to hold this self-referential quality at its center, such that it promotes an extreme mode of self-referential discourse that is unique to the *Lotus Sūtra*. The sūtra often speaks of the wondrous nature of the *Lotus Sūtra*, right in the text commonly referred to as the *Lotus Sūtra*. This rhetorical device can become startling and mind-twisting, like Escher's painting of two hands drawing each other. Various important figures in the sūtra appear within the text of the *Lotus Sūtra* because they have heard that the *Lotus Sūtra* is currently being preached by Śākyamuni Buddha on Vulture Peak. For example, in chapter eleven, the stūpa of the ancient Buddha Prabhūtaratna emerges from the earth and floats in mid-air, because he has vowed always to appear *whenever* the *Lotus Sūtra* is preached.[9] In the same chapter, myriad bodhisattvas arrive from world systems in all directions, in order to praise the Buddha for preaching this sūtra in which they are appearing.

This quality of the sūtra talking about the sūtra, and especially its many references to the *Lotus Sūtra* as something expounded many ages ago, as about to be expounded, or even as hoped to be expounded in the distant future, has led some commentators to observe that the whole text of this sūtra, more than any others, is a preface to a missing scripture. As George and Willa Tanabe say:

> The preaching of the *Lotus* sermon promised in the first chapter *never takes place*. The text, so full of merit, is *about* a discourse which is never delivered; it is a lengthy preface without a book. The *Lotus Sūtra* is thus unique among texts. It is not merely subject to various interpretations, as all texts are, but is open or empty at its very center.[10]

This is a plausible perspective or interpretation. The text does refer, in the third person, to a designated text that one might keep vainly waiting for, as if for Godot.

However, this perspective misses the manner in which the *Lotus* sermon certainly does exist. Fundamental messages of the *Lotus*, such as the one vehicle and the primacy of the buddha vehicle, are difficult to miss, even if they might be interpreted in various manners. But furthermore, between the lines the *Lotus Sūtra* functions within itself both as a sacred text or scripture, and as a commentary and guidebook to its own use, beyond the literal confines of its own written text. The *Lotus Sūtra* is itself a sacred manifestation of spiritual awakening that proclaims its own sacrality. Right within the text's proclamation of the wonders of a text with the same name as itself, the text celebrates its own ephemeral quality with the visionary splendors of its assembly of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and spirits, and with the engaging qualities of its parables.

The synthesis of the immanent spirit spoken about in the text, and the text's own intended functioning as an instrument or skillful catalyst to spark awakening, has been carried on among its followers. This is exemplified in the varieties of Nichiren Buddhism, in that they are rooted and focused in devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* itself as a sacred manifestation, and devotional object, which they are committed to proclaiming and promulgating. But for Dōgen, the self-proclamation of the dharma in the *Lotus Sūtra* becomes an aspect of his rhetorical style, rather than an externalized objectification.

In similar manner to the sūtra's proclamations of the wondrous qualities of the *Lotus* dharma, Dōgen in his writings commonly proclaims the wondrous nature of the dharma, the buddha, the many buddha ancestors, previous proclamations or utterances by ancestral teachers, and of course the *Lotus Sūtra* itself. Dōgen's style of discourse is usually not explanatory, discursive, or logical in the linear manner of modern rationality or cognition. Instead, Dōgen seemingly free-associates, making illuminating connections based on doctrinal themes or imagistic motifs, aimed at proclaiming the non-dual reality of the present phenomenal world as fully imbued with the presence of the Buddha and of the ongoing possibility of awakening.

A clear encapsulation of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s self-proclamatory discourse strategy appears in volume one of Dōgen's *Eihei Kōroku* in two consecutive

jōdō (dharma hall discourses), numbers 69 and 70, given in 1241.[11] *Jōdō* number 69 reads in its entirety:

> [Dōgen] said: Today this mountain monk [Dōgen] gives a Dharma hall discourse for the assembly. What I have just said I offer to all the three treasures in the ten directions, to the twenty-eight Ancestors in India, to the six Ancestors in China, to all the nostrils under heaven, to the eyeballs throughout the past and present, to dried shitsticks, to three pounds of sesame, to Zen boards, and to zafus. Previously we offered incense for the limitless excellent causal conditions, and we dedicate it so that toads may leap up to Brahma's heaven, earthworms may traverse the eastern ocean, and clouds and water monks may become horses and cows. All buddhas, ten directions, three times; All honored ones, bodhisattva mahasattvas; Mahāprajñāpāramitā.[12]

Here Dōgen states that he is proclaiming a *jōdō*. But immediately, without saying anything more *about* the dharma, he dedicates that statement itself to the three jewels, the ancestral teachers, to meditation paraphernalia, and to famed Chan iconoclastic expressions for buddha, Yunmen's dried shitstick (or dry turd) and his disciple Dongshan Shouchu's three pounds of sesame (or flax).[13] He then further dedicates the incense offering, which had preceded the statement that he was now making a statement, to toads, earthworms, and monks who manifest as horses and cows, followed by the traditional concluding liturgical dedication. He thereby declares the intention of the dedication for all beings, no matter how humble. As in the *Lotus Sūtra*, there is no visible dharma expressed except for the celebration via proclamation of a non-explicit dharma.

Then, in the following *jōdō*, number 70, Dōgen explicitly comments on his own use of self-referential dharma, while engaging even further in celebrating an unexpressed dharma. We do not know how many days may have separated the two discourses. In this section of the text, between the *jōdō*s that can be dated and that are four months apart, there were an average of two discourses per week. But whatever the interval, it is clear in the overall text of *Eihei Kōroku* that the different discourses, recorded chronologically with only very rare exceptions, are often linked sequentially through the associations of theme, imagery, ancestral figures, or textual allusion. *Jōdō* number 70 says:

> [Dōgen] said: As this mountain monk [Dōgen] today gives a dharma hall discourse, all buddhas in the three times also today give a dharma hall discourse. The Ancestral teachers in all generations also today give a dharma hall discourse. The one who bears the sixteen-foot golden body gives a dharma hall discourse. The one endowed with the wondrous function of the hundred grasses (all

things) gives a dharma hall discourse. Already together having given a dharma hall discourse, what dharma has been expounded? No other dharma is expressed; but this very dharma is expressed. What is this dharma? It is upheld within Shanglan Temple; it is upheld within Guanyin Temple; it is upheld within the monks' hall; it is upheld within the buddha hall.[14]

Again, Dōgen never talks about the content of his dharma hall discourse. But he proclaims that his own act of proclaiming this self-referencing dharma is echoed simultaneously in the discourses of the ancestral teachers and buddhas, just as the proclamation of the *Lotus Sūtra* is echoed in various buddha realms, in various times. Then Dōgen asks the same question that the Tanabes ask about the *Lotus Sūtra*, "What dharma has been expounded?" And Dōgen answers unabashedly, "No other dharma is expressed; but this very dharma is expressed. What is this dharma?" While not explaining or even stating the content of this dharma, his phrase "This very [Jpn. *shako*] dharma" might seem to refer to the teaching of suchness, or *tathatā*, but it is also simply just this dharma, as opposed to that one. Thereby Dōgen emphasizes not an abstraction, but the concreteness of phenomenal reality as the realm of dharma. Then Dōgen does declare and affirm that this non-explicit teaching is upheld in the context of the temples and the buildings where the practice is carried on.

The example in these two *jōdō*s of Dōgen's proclamation of a non-explicit dharma is presented in a direct and concise manner, as appropriate to the often brief declarations of the *jōdō* form. But this rhetorical strategy recurs, more or less subtly, in many places throughout *Shōbōgenzō*, as well as in *Eihei Kōroku*. That Dōgen is adapting this rhetorical posture at least in part directly from the *Lotus Sūtra* is clearly evidenced by another early *jōdō* in the *Eihei Kōroku*, number 24, given in 1240:

In the entire universe in ten directions there is no dharma at all that has not yet been expounded by all buddhas in the three times. Therefore all buddhas say, "In the same manner that all buddhas in the three times expound the dharma, so now I also will expound the dharma without differentiations." This great assembly present before me also is practicing the way in the manner of all buddhas. Each movement, each stillness is not other than the dharma of all buddhas, so do not act carelessly or casually. Although this is the case, I have an expression that has not yet been expounded by any buddha. Everyone, do you want to discern it?

After a pause [Dōgen] said: In the same manner that all buddhas in the three times expound the dharma, so now I also will expound the dharma without differentiations.[15]

In this dharma hall discourse Dōgen again does not elaborate on the content of the dharma expounded by all buddhas in the three times, except to aver that it is no other than every movement, and every stillness, and is practiced by the monks at Eiheiji. Significant to the point of this chapter is the context of this quote mentioned by Dōgen from Śākyamuni Buddha: "In the same manner that all buddhas in the three times expound the dharma, so now I also will expound the dharma without differentiations." This statement that Dōgen uses to express the inexplicit dharma proclaimed by all buddhas is from the *Lotus Sūtra*, chapter two on "Skillful Means."[16] Dōgen further emphasizes this quote when he repeats it verbatim as his own expression for the inexplicit dharma, which he claims "Has not yet been expounded by any buddha." But saying it has not previously been expounded is tantamount to Dōgen himself preaching the original *Lotus Sūtra*, or to his own manifestation as the buddha in the *Lotus* text in which it is first expounded.

There are ample examples of response with silence, or of indirect or inexplicit dharma proclamation within the Chan literature that is Dōgen's primary lexicon. Yet the *Lotus Sūtra* referent for this 1240 *jōdō* about expounding the dharma clearly demonstrates that Dōgen himself saw the *Lotus Sūtra*, "expounded by all buddhas in the three times," as an important source for this self-proclamatory rhetorical style of expounding. Further studies of any references to the *Lotus Sūtra* in the development of early Chan rhetorical styles might be informative. But it is apparent that Dōgen himself saw the *Lotus* as one model for a nondualistic, inexplicit discourse approach.

The self-reflexive as a skillful mode

In *The Karma of Words*, William LaFleur discusses the sophisticated nature of the *Lotus Sūtra* as literature, and its impact in medieval Japanese poetics:

> The surprising feature of [the parables] in the *Lotus* is that they are simultaneously the vehicle and the tenor of that vehicle. In a very important sense, the parables of the *Lotus* are about the role and status of parabolic speech itself. They are what I would call self-reflexive allegory; that is, their trajectory of discourse behaves like a boomerang. Much like the Dharma described in a crucial section of the *hōben* chapter, they are characterized by "the absolute identity [or equality] of their beginning and end."[17]

LaFleur's analysis of this realm of discourse in the *Lotus Sūtra* focuses on its radical nondualism, and its embodiment of skillful means. This standpoint of nondualism represents interpretations of the *Lotus Sūtra* developed in Tiantai and in Japanese Buddhism prior to Dōgen, and which impacted the medieval literature LaFleur examines. From such a nondualistic viewpoint,

LaFleur suggests translating *hōben* as "modes" rather than the more common translations of skillful or expedient means. Hurvitz translates *hōben* as "expedient devices," and Watson translates it as "expedient means," both implying a dualistic, and even manipulative, aspect of the teaching, especially when rendered as "devices." Kato, Tamura, and Miyasaka translate it as "tactfulness," which implies more consideration and inclusivity, but might still be seen as implying a hierarchy of the teachings.

The *hōben* (Skt. *upāya*) doctrine is a problematic aspect in the *Lotus ekayāna* (one vehicle) teaching. The *Lotus* at times has been upheld, within the sūtra itself as well as by some of its followers – for example, in the Tiantai *panjiao* system – as the supreme epitome of the one vehicle. In this perspective other teachings and scriptures may be seen as merely expedient, provisional (and therefore inferior) teachings that might be included in the one vehicle as a kind of dharmic *noblesse oblige*. Such a view of *upāya* implies a hierarchy of teachings, and even a manipulative use of them. Unquestionably the *Lotus Sūtra* lends itself, and often explicitly encourages, a political, polemical reading in which the *Lotus*, and those who preach it, represent the true dharma, and those who follow provisional, expedient teachings exemplify the chaff, inimical to the full teaching.

On the other hand, the alternate mode of reading the teaching of *upāya*, as championed by LaFleur, implies a radically nondualistic inclusivity, and an acceptance of all helpful teachings as simply a diversity of "modes." Portions of the *Lotus Sūtra* do indeed lend themselves to this alternate, more tolerant and inclusive reading of *hōben*. For example, in chapter five the parable of the dharma rain falling universally on all implies no discrimination against any of the many plants that are equally nourished, each growing in its own way. Applied as appropriate to the diversity of needs of suffering beings, all teaching modes might be equally beneficial to the ultimate purpose for buddhas' manifestation, as proclaimed in the *upāya* chapter:

> By resort to numberless devices and to various means, parables, and phrases do [buddhas] proclaim the dharmas, . . . for one great cause appearing in the world, . . . to cause beings to hear the Buddha's knowledge, . . . to cause the beings to understand, . . . to cause the beings to enter the path.[18]

Such an inclusive reading of *hōben* might be usefully appropriated to modern concerns of religious pluralism, which may be LaFleur's subtext. But LaFleur's reading also has implications for styles of discourse, the primary issue under consideration here.

LaFleur sees the sūtra's primary liberative purpose and its various skillful modes expressed nondualistically as exactly the reason for the sūtra's self-referential discourse style. In his reading:

> The narratives of the *Lotus* are not a means to an end beyond themselves. Their concrete mode of expression is not "chaff" to be dispensed with in order to attain a more abstract, rational, or spiritual truth. The *Lotus* is unequivocal on this point: "One may seek in every one of the ten directions but will find no mode [*hōben*] other than the Buddha's." This accounts for what may seem to be an inordinate amount of praise directed by the sūtra toward itself. It also implies that within the sūtra there is an unmistakable philosophical move opposite to that in Plato's *Republic*, a move to affirm the complete reality of the world of concrete phenomena in spite of the fact that they are impermanent.[19]

This common Japanese association of the *Lotus Sūtra* with affirmation of the reality of the phenomenal world, followed here by LaFleur, can be dated back to the Japanese Tendai founder Saichō. Having studied with two of the disciples of the Chinese Huayan master Zhanran, who argued for the buddha nature of insentient beings (a teaching that Dōgen would also later frequently celebrate), Saichō incorporated Huayan (Jpn. Kegon) views of suchness into Tendai. But Saichō also applied this in an original way to his interpretation of the *Lotus Sūtra*. His reading "not only acknowledges two aspects of suchness but establishes a hierarchy between the two in identifying the dynamic aspect of suchness – its expression as the phenomenal world – with the Tiantai category of the 'middle' and with the one vehicle of the *Lotus*. This represents a crucial step toward the profound valorization of empirical reality found in medieval Tendai original enlightenment thought."[20]

From this Japanese Tendai perspective of spiritual reality immanent in concrete phenomena, the *Lotus Sūtra* itself is not separate from, or talking *about*, a realm of transcendent spirit outside of itself. Thus the *Lotus Sūtra* itself can become an embodiment of the awakening aspect of the phenomenal world, omnipresent, at least in potentiality, in all concrete phenomena. The self-referential or self-reflexive aspect of the sūtra demonstrates the non-separation of its liberative goals from the Buddha's skillful modes. Given the nonduality of purpose and context of the *Lotus Sūtra* as a text that itself represents and enacts veneration of the world's liberative potential, it is reasonable that this very sūtra would become an object of veneration, as in Nichiren Buddhism.

To be sure, Dōgen is not inclusive of the diverse modes of teachings in LaFleur's strictly non-hierarchical fashion, as, in common with all of the Kamakura innovators, Dōgen at times upholds his own teaching lineage and strongly disparages others. However, Dōgen's use of *Lotus*-style self-referential discourse is directed at affirmation of the nondualism of means and end, and he repeatedly affirms the phenomenal realm as the arena of nondual practice-realization, in accord with LaFleur's view of the *Lotus Sūtra* discourse as based on *hōben*. In a similar skillful mode, Dōgen often

intentionally uses words as vehicles to express the discourse he is then proclaiming. Dōgen's frequent inversion of conventional word order and word meaning from classical *kōan*s or sūtras serves to express this quality of proclamation, in which the discourse itself demonstrates that which it is expounding.

A prominent example is the oft-cited wordplay in *Shōbōgenzō Busshō*, "Buddha Nature," first written in 1241, in which Dōgen retranslates the passage from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, "All sentient beings without exception have Buddha nature." By rereading the characters "*shitsu-u*" as "whole being," rather than "all have," Dōgen alters the passage to, "All sentient beings' whole being [is] Buddha nature."[21] This elimination of dualistic grammar itself demonstrates the nondualism between sentient beings and buddha nature.

In further accord with LaFleur's view of the *Lotus* discourse, Dōgen specifically affirms "the complete reality of the world of concrete phenomena" in his discourse rhetoric as well as its content, and even when leaving the content itself seemingly absent, or at least not stated. In *jōdō* number 49 in the *Eihei Kōroku*, also given in 1241, Dōgen says:

> This mountain monk has not lectured for the sake of the assembly for a long time. Why is this? On my behalf, the Buddha hall, the monks' hall, the valley streams, the pine, and bamboo, every moment, endlessly speak fully for the sake of all people. Have you all heard it or not? If you say you heard it, what did you hear? If you say you have not heard it, you do not keep the five precepts.[22]

Here Dōgen rhetorically affirms the immanence of the dharmic discourse as well as its content, right in the world of dharmas, or phenomena, including streams, pines, bamboo, and temple buildings, which all themselves discourse on this dharma. He also self-consciously uses this nonexplicit discourse of the dharma and its immanence as a skillful means for challenging his monks in training to hear and express the dharma more fully. "Have you all heard it or not?"

Dōgen's use of the fantastic

Another literary aspect of the *Lotus Sūtra* that is disconcerting to conventional analysis is the degree to which its stories and teachings are rooted in images and fantasies. In his introduction to his book on Myōe, whose life and teaching were colorfully replete with the visionary, George Tanabe Jr cites the centrality of visions to East Asian Buddhist experience, despite the focus of much of modern Buddhist studies on doctrine and philosophy. "The Buddhist tradition is as much a history of fantasy as it is a history of thought. It should be studied as such to gain a better understanding not

only of Buddhism as a fantastic philosophy, but of Buddhists as sentient beings as well."[23]

In the context of Myōe studies, Tanabe's discussion of the fantastic might more directly apply to the psychedelic visions of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, which Myōe, as a Kegon monk, especially cherished. But Tanabe's remarks also certainly pertain to the striking images and parables of the *Lotus*, about which he says, "The *Lotus Sūtra* is less a work of memory and more a product of fantasy inspired with new visions derived internally."[24] Thus, examining the significance and function of the *Lotus Sūtra*'s imagery is called for as much as, if not more than, examining its philosophical positions. As Tanabe says:

> Mahāyāna Buddhism is, among many things it can be, a tradition of the mind's faculty for producing images in both waking life and sleep: a tradition, that is, of fantasy producing visions, . . . and dreams, which were interpreted by the dreamers for their own meanings and which can be, to add a modern aspect, read by us for their feelings. It will be possible to gain a better understanding of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a vehicle not only of ideas and institutions but of human emotion as well only when studies of the fantastic end of the spectrum become more available.[25]

In this context, the *Lotus Sūtra* parables and self-referential discourse style can be seen as the internal expression of vision, or fantasy, that expresses the human experience of Mahāyāna practice, more than its philosophical content. Even when, as may frequently be the case, such discourse is a literary device or artifice, rather than directly inspired by literal meditative experience, visions, or dreams, such literary framing serves to honor the skillful use of imagination and the visionary.

The *Lotus Sūtra* itself includes a parable that uses a fantastic vision to demonstrate how fantastic visions function as skillful liberative modes. In chapter seven, a conjured or phantom city is described as a vision that serves as a metaphor for the teaching of nirvāṇa as cessation, which can provide a half-way oasis on the path to Mahāyāna universal liberation. Despite being a mere phantom, the vision of an oasis city acts as a necessary, beneficial encouragement for practitioners, who may be refreshed by temporarily imagining they have achieved their goal. Similarly, *Lotus Sūtra* parables, no matter how fantastic, themselves function as beneficial encouragements.

In another of the numerous examples in *Shōbōgenzō* of Dōgen using wordplay to invert conventional thinking, in "Muchū Setsumu" (Within a Dream Expressing the Dream), written in 1242, Dōgen extensively elaborates on the statement that all buddhas express the dream within a dream.[26] He thereby denies the supposedly lesser reality of the "dreams"

of the transient phenomenal world, and negates a Platonic exaltation of the absolute, which LaFleur describes as the antithesis of *Lotus* teaching. Instead, Dōgen proclaims the dream world of phenomena as exactly the realm of buddhas' activity. "Every dewdrop manifested in every realm is a dream. This dream is the glowing clarity of the hundred grasses. . . . Do not mistake them as merely dreamy."[27] The liberative awakening of buddhas is itself described as a dream:

> Without expressing dreams, there are no buddhas. Without being within a dream, buddhas do not emerge and turn the wondrous dharma wheel. This dharma wheel is no other than a buddha together with a buddha, and a dream expressed within a dream. Simply expressing the dream within a dream is itself the buddhas and ancestors, the assembly of unsurpassable enlightenment.[28]

Dōgen is not frivolously indulging in mere paradox here, but follows the logic of the dream as necessarily the locus of awakening. As Dōgen says in his celebrated essay "Genjōkōan," "Those who have great realization of delusion are buddhas."[29] What is worthy of study is not delusions or fantasies about enlightenment, but the reality of the causes and conditions of the realms of delusion and suffering. A similar logic is expressed in the *Lotus Sūtra* dictum that buddhas manifest only due to the presence of suffering beings. Dōgen's positive view of dreams will be significant in his parables, discussed below, two of which Dōgen frames as if they might have been dreams, whether or not they were his actual sleeping "dreams."

Dōgen does not attend to literal dreams with anywhere near the same dedication as his contemporary, Myōe, as exemplified by Myōe's extraordinary forty-year dream journal.[30] Along with Myōe, dreams and visionary discourse are also more emphasized than they are by Dōgen in the teachings of Keizan, Dōgen's third generation successor, who is revered as the second founder of Japanese Sōtō Zen. The central role of dream and vision for Keizan has been discussed and elaborated by Bernard Faure in his *Visions of Power*.[31] Keizan and his successors in the following few generations helped to spread Sōtō Zen throughout rural Japan. One stereotype in Sōtō studies is the distinction between Keizan's use of the visionary, inspired by esoteric teachings, and the supposedly more "pure" Zen of Dōgen. According to this stereotype, Dōgen emphasized *zazen* and a rational presentation of buddhadharma, untainted by the more colorful and melodramatic Mahāyāna and esoteric teachings indulged in by Keizan.[32] However, Dōgen does indeed employ dreams and visions as skillful teaching tools. While we may certainly note differences in emphasis and style between Dōgen and Keizan, Dōgen is in fundamental accord with the world-view of medieval Japan, including the esoteric teachings of Shingon and Tendai that were the background for all Kamakura Buddhism. Dōgen sees the phenomenal world as dynamically

alive, and imbued with spirit forces. His visionary context is perhaps most apparent in his interpretations and appropriations of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and in his own references to dreaming.

In "Muchū Setsumu" (Within a Dream Expressing the Dream), Dōgen explicitly refers to the *Lotus Sūtra* as a source for the role of dreams in his discourse style. He quotes a long passage that concludes the final verse in chapter fourteen of the sūtra, beginning from "All buddhas, with bodies of golden hue, splendidly adorned with a hundred auspicious marks, hear the Dharma and expound it for others. Such is the fine dream that ever occurs." Dōgen interprets this passage as saying that the whole archetypal story of the Buddha occurs in a dream. Dōgen's reading takes this passage out of its context in the sūtra to emphasize that the Buddha is "made king," leaves the palace, awakens under the *bodhi* tree, and conducts his whole teaching career, all in a dream.[33] Thus this passage at the close of chapter fourteen is creatively interpreted by Dōgen to serve as a foreshadowing for the revelation in chapter sixteen of Buddha's inconceivable life-span, in which the archetypal story of his birth, awakening, teaching, and death is more explicitly revealed as a skillful means to encourage beings.

After quoting this passage, Dōgen avers that "This dream of buddhas is not an analogy." In the original context of the *Lotus Sūtra* text, this passage is merely describing the rewards of those who preach the *Lotus*, in this instance the reward of auspicious dreams.[34] But Dōgen uses his creative reading to validate, or at least exemplify, his teaching that the dream-state of the conditioned phenomenal world is exactly the arena for awakening. But here he is furthermore claiming the dream mentioned by the *Lotus Sūtra* as a model for a skillful discourse mode that has recourse to the visionary as a tool for liberation. As in the *Lotus Sūtra* self-reflexive discourse style, the parable expression is itself a skillful mode of reality for Dōgen, not separate from concrete phenomena. Dōgen continues:

> People in the past and present mistakenly think that, thanks to the power of expounding "this foremost dharma," mere night dreams may become like this dream of buddhas. Thinking like this, one has not yet clarified the Buddha's discourse. Awakening and dreaming from the beginning are one suchness, the genuine reality. The buddha-dharma, even if it were an analogy, is the genuine reality.[35]

For Dōgen, the particular events of this dream world are the reality, and also the skillful discourse, of the awakening of buddhas.

Dōgen's parables

The essays of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, such as "Muchū Setsumu," are sometimes philosophical and elaborative of traditional Buddhist or Zen doctrines, and

are addressed to a general audience of his contemporaries. In *Eihei Kōroku*, by contrast, Dōgen is directly addressing his small cadre of monk disciples at Eiheiji, stretching for means to encourage and develop their practice. In this work, the primary available source for his mature teachings, as well as occasionally revealing humor or feelings such as sadness or regret, Dōgen at times offers his own parables, often using fantastic, playful imagery, sometimes expressed as if in dreams.

In the following three parables from *Eihei Kōroku jōdō*s, Dōgen's appropriation of *Lotus* and Mahāyāna vision is evidenced through the allusions to Mahāyāna rhetoric or figures in each of them. In *Eihei Kōroku jōdō* number 229, given in 1247, Dōgen directly parodies the rhetoric of Mahāyāna sūtras:

> The millions of billions of transformation bodies [of buddhas] abide throughout a monk's staff, carry water and gather firewood to make offerings to buddhas as numerous as there are sitting cushions, and, on the tip of a whisk, simultaneously all attain unsurpassed complete perfect enlightenment. They are all equally named Broken Wooden Ladle Tathāgata, Worthy of Offerings, Omniscient, Foot of Bright Practice, Well Gone One, World Liberator, Supreme One, Strong Controlling Person, Teacher of Humans and Heavenly Beings, World-Honored Buddha. The Country [of this Buddha] is named Clump of Soil; the kalpa is named Fist. The duration of the True Dharma Age and Semblance Dharma Age are both twelve hours, and the buddha's longevity is that of a dried turd from three thousand great thousands of worlds. Do you all understand?
>
> If you state your understanding you are making mistake after mistake. If you say you do not understand, even the five precepts are not maintained.[36]

Dōgen plays with words here, replacing the conventional sūtra rhetoric for a buddha abiding throughout *kalpa*s with his abiding throughout a monk's staff. Instead of making offerings to buddhas as numerous as the proverbial grains of sand in the Ganges River, Dōgen substitutes buddhas as numerous as sitting cushions. Instead of the Buddha sitting under the *bodhi* tree as he attains enlightenment, Dōgen has him sitting on top of a whisk. Dōgen then applies the standard ten epithets for a buddha, starting with "Tathāgata," to a new buddha invented here by Dōgen, named Broken Wooden Ladle, who might be seen as a reference to all the humble monks practicing under him at Eiheiji. Continuing with his parody of conventional Mahāyāna sūtra rhetoric, Dōgen designates the buddha land of this fabulous new buddha as "Clump of Soil," his kalpa as "Fist," and his longevity as that of a dried turd.

Dōgen seems to mock the standard Mahāyāna sūtra rhetoric, iconoclastically mimicking a formula for describing buddhas used often in the *Lotus*

Sūtra – for example, in chapters eight and nine on the predictions of future buddhahood of the five hundred disciples, and of learners and adepts.[37] However, Dōgen actually is affirming his view of the *Lotus Sūtra*, as originally interpreted by Saichō and expressed by LaFleur, that validates the world of concrete phenomena as expressive of the essence of awakening. The new buddha is called Broken Wooden Ladle in celebration of a humble implement, to which Dōgen frequently refers in highly exalted terms. For example, in *jōdō* number 204 in 1246 he says, "If you really know it, the temple pillars confirm that, and the wooden ladles study together with you." Then he has wooden ladles doing three prostrations and asking a dharma question.[38] Similarly revered in *jōdō* number 229, above, are the practice paraphernalia of sitting cushions, a monk's staff, and a teacher's whisk. But in celebrating humble phenomena, Dōgen also emphasizes their ephemerality, as he says that the true and semblance dharma ages of Broken Wooden Ladle Buddha endure merely twelve hours. Although an intact wooden ladle is a useful implement, here the Buddha is named Broken Wooden Ladle, further emphasizing transiency, and recalling the Zen phrase "the bottom of a bucket broken out," which signifies the letting go of attachments in opening experiences.

Dōgen's challenge to his monks at the end of the *jōdō* echoes the prominent Chan dharma combat rhetoric style of *kōan* anthologies such as the *Hekiganroku* (*Blue Cliff Record*). However, his statement "If you state your understanding you are making mistake after mistake" might also be seen as a rationale for the whole *Lotus Sūtra* self-referential strategy of not explicitly stating the content of the dharma being celebrated and proclaimed. Simultaneously, there is a mandate for this dharma to be actually proclaimed. "If you say you do not understand, even the five precepts are not maintained" implies the ethical responsibility not to deny whatever is realized, despite its ephemerality. This may be seen as echoing the frequent theme in the *Lotus Sūtra* of the responsibility of Śākyamuni's disciples to maintain the *Lotus* dharma in the future. Again, whether Dōgen's rhetoric here borrows more from Chan tradition or more from the indirect modes of the *Lotus Sūtra* is not the issue. The fact that he uses this style to mimic *Lotus Sūtra*'s rhetoric, however, does indicate that in this *jōdō* Dōgen is concerned and aware of *Lotus Sūtra*'s discourse style, and of appropriating it rhetorically, at least in part.

In the following two examples, Dōgen provides fantastic parables that seem to be framed as dreams when he describes them as happening "last night." Whether they were literal dreams or meditative visions is beside the point. As Bernard Faure says, "For Buddhists there is no clear distinction between dreams that come during sleep and visions achieved in a waking state, or more precisely during meditation, in a state (*samādhi*) that, like trance, is often defined as being 'neither sleeping nor waking'."[39] Whether realized in sleep or *samādhi*, or merely used intentionally as literary

devices invoking the visionary qualities of *samādhi*, Dōgen uses these visions to "express the dream within the dream," i.e. to reveal awakening amid the phenomenal. In his Enlightenment Day *jōdō*, number 88, in 1241, Dōgen says:

> Two thousand years later, we are the descendants [of Śākyamuni]. Two thousand years ago, he was our ancestral father. He is muddy and wet from following and chasing after the waves. It can be described like this, but also there is the principle of the Way [that we must] make one mistake after another. What is this like? Whether Buddha is present or not present, I trust he is right under our feet. Face after face is Buddha's face; fulfillment after fulfillment is Buddha's fulfillment.
>
> Last night, this mountain monk [Dōgen] unintentionally stepped on a dried turd and it jumped up and covered heaven and earth. This mountain monk unintentionally stepped on it again, and it introduced itself, saying, "My name is Śākyamuni." Then, this mountain monk unintentionally stepped on his chest, and immediately he went and sat on the *vajra* seat, saw the morning star, bit through the traps and snares of conditioned birth, and cast away his old nest from the past. Without waiting for anyone to peck at his shell from outside, he received the thirty-two characteristics common to all buddhas, and together with this mountain monk, composed the following four line verse:
>
> Stumbling I stepped on his chest and his backbone snapped,
> Mountains and rivers swirling around, the dawn wind blew.
> Penetrating seven and accomplishing eight,
> bones piercing the heavens,
> His face attained a sheet of golden skin.[40]

In this *jōdō* Dōgen describes a dream-like fantasy in which he accidentally steps on a piece of shit, and in accord with Yunmen's utterance often cited by Dōgen, it jumps up and declares itself to be Śākyamuni. This vision increases the apparent disrespect for Buddha in Yunmen's utterance, as Dōgen again steps on his back (albeit again accidentally), even after the dried shit identifies himself as Śākyamuni. But Dōgen uses this scatological vision not to degrade, but to further celebrate Buddha, by declaring that upon being stepped on, "He went and sat on the *vajra* seat, saw the morning star, bit through the traps and snares of conditioned birth, and cast away his old nest from the past."

Here Dōgen skillfully proclaims and celebrates, non-explicitly, one of the major revelations of the *Lotus Sūtra*, that of the Buddha's lifespan enduring over inconceivable ages (mentioned above in connection with Dōgen's

reference in "Expressing the Dream Within the Dream"). In chapter sixteen, Śākyamuni reveals that his archetypal story of his home-leaving and awakening is demonstrated simply as a skillful mode. The effect of this dream parable of Dōgen is to reinforce the story about skillful modes in chapter sixteen by describing buddha and his awakening process as still omnipresent, "last night" right at Eiheiji, and even in excrement.

Dōgen's dream story also echoes the *Lotus Sūtra*, chapter four, parable of the prodigal son, who can only come to realize his fundamental endowment after years of shoveling manure in his father's field. As Dōgen says in the introduction to his parable, even Śākyamuni "is muddy and wet from following and chasing after the waves." Dōgen's further introductory statement, "Whether buddha is present or not present, I trust he is right under our feet," echoes the *Lotus Sūtra* parable about the ragged beggar unknowingly having the dharma jewel sewed within his robe. It further suggests the image in chapter fifteen of myriad bodhisattvas suddenly springing forth from beneath the ground "under our feet," which represents the omnipresence of the bodhisattva potential in the ground of concrete phenomena.

Having venerated Śākyamuni Buddha via seeming desecration in this last *jōdō* parable, in *Eihei Kōroku jōdō* number 123, given in 1243, Dōgen describes another dream vision, this one seeming to poke fun at Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion:

> One sheet of dull stubbornness is three inches thick. Three lengths of upside-downness is five feet long. Last night, this mountain monk [Dōgen] struck the empty sky with a single blow. My fist didn't hurt, but the empty sky knew pain. A number of sesame cakes appeared and rushed to become the faces and eyes of the great earth.
>
> Suddenly a person came to this mountain monk and said, "I want to buy the sesame cakes."
>
> This mountain monk said to him, "Who are you?"
>
> The person replied to this mountain monk, "I am Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. My family name is Chang, and my personal name is Li."
>
> This mountain monk said to him, "Did you bring any money?"
>
> He said, "I came without any money."
>
> I asked him, "If you didn't bring money, can you buy them or not?"
>
> He didn't answer, but just said, "I want to buy them, I really do."
>
> Do you totally, thoroughly understand the meaning of this?
>
> After a pause [Dōgen] said: When Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva makes an appearance, mountains and rivers on the great earth are not dead ashes. You should always remember that in the third month the partridges sing and the flowers open.[41]

In the mock creation myth in the introduction to the *jōdō*, Dōgen punches out the empty sky. Then with bravado akin to such classic Chan masters of fisticuffs as Linji or Deshan (Jpn. Rinzai and Tokusan), Dōgen declares that his fist didn't hurt, but the sky, which can also be read as emptiness itself, "knew pain." Like the skillful fists of Linji or Deshan, with their constructive impact on their monk trainees, Dōgen's fist brings forth a cascade of sesame cakes, which in turn shower down as thousands of faces and eyes.

The several references to the *kōan* lexicon by Dōgen in this *jōdō* include case 78 of the *Shōyōroku* (*Book of Serenity*) anthology. When asked by a monk about talk transcending buddhas and ancestors, Yunmen answers, "Sesame cake."[42] In case 82 of the *Shōyōroku*, the association of Yunmen with sesame cakes continues when he says, "The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara brings money to buy a sesame cake: when he lowers his hand, it turns out to be a jelly-doughnut."[43] This story must have inspired Dōgen's vision of Avalokiteśvara striving to purchase sesame cakes. But Dōgen envisions the sesame cakes as transformed into dynamically active eyes and faces rather than jelly-doughnuts, which are still mere commodities, even if richer than sesame cakes.

As Dōgen's parable in *jōdō* 123 unfolds with dream-like narrative, someone shows up who wants to buy the sesame cakes (transformed into faces and eyes). When Dōgen inquires, the person identifies himself as Avalokiteśvara, just as the piece of shit in the previously discussed dream parable identifies himself as Śākyamuni. Presumably Avalokiteśvara is trying to acquire from Dōgen the eleven faces and thousand eyes for his hands as depicted in one of the bodhisattva's foremost iconographic forms.[44] With these multiple perspectives, the bodhisattva of compassion can fulfill the skillful means that he is known for, as seen in his diversity of forms in chapter twenty-five of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

When Avalokiteśvara further identifies himself by the very common Chinese names Chang and Li, this represents Avalokiteśvara as an ordinary person. Even in a dream (or a literary discourse he frames as visionary or dream-like), Dōgen is thereby implicitly affirming practice in the mundane world and the immanent presence of compassion. In "Expressing the Dream Within the Dream," written the year before the parable in *jōdō* 123, Dōgen declares that "The expression of the dream within the dream is the thousand hands and eyes of Avalokiteśvara that function by many means."[45] Here he explicitly denotes the discourse mode, the expression itself, as an aspect or example of Avalokiteśvara's skillful means.

The parable itself ends with Avalokiteśvara expressing his commitment and determination to obtain the eyes and faces (formerly sesame cakes), with which to proceed with his work of compassion, whether or not he has any money. In his own concluding commentary, Dōgen adds, "When Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva makes an appearance, mountains and rivers on the great earth are not dead ashes." Here Dōgen emphasizes the dynamic,

liberating quality of the world of concrete phenomena. For Dōgen, the whole world and its components, even the dreams within a dream, are the vital functioning of awakening, like the conjured city in the *Lotus Sūtra* parable, assisting those on the path. Dōgen's *jōdō* concludes with a further affirmation of the enlightening potency of the phenomenal world, "You should always remember that in the third month the partridges sing and the flowers open." Here the emergence of vitality in spring, and also its very invocation, functions skillfully as an encouraging metaphor for the enduring potential of awakening in his disciple audience.

The parables in the *Lotus Sūtra* may lack Dōgen's humorous irony and visionary whimsy. But in accord with LaFleur's account of the function of those parables, Dōgen uses his dream parables similarly as skillful modes with which to encourage his monks' engagement with and affirmation of "the complete reality of the world of concrete phenomena in spite of the fact that they are impermanent."

Conclusion

In his *Eihei Kōroku*, Dōgen relates parables that echo the function of the parables in the *Lotus Sūtra* by demonstrating the presence of wondrous dharma, right in the phenomenal world and in the midst of karmic consciousness. While such parables are occasional, and certainly not Dōgen's major mode of literary expression, they do exemplify his borrowing of *Lotus Sūtra* styles in his discourse.

More significantly than in Dōgen's occasional use of parables, the profuse self-referencing of the *Lotus Sūtra* and the complex, skillful impact of this self-reflexive discourse serves as one major resource or model for Dōgen's style of proclamation. Dōgen follows the *Lotus Sūtra* self-referential style in various of his rhetorical modes to proclaim and celebrate a teaching that often remains unstated, but that may be more provocative because of this quality of the non-explicit. Dōgen's self-referential, proclamatory discourse (at least in some part borrowed from the *Lotus Sūtra* discourse style), used as a mode with which to express and exemplify radical nondualism, becomes a model for Sōtō Zen expression and practice, supporting prominent Sōtō teachings such as the oneness of practice and realization.

This chapter has focused on suggesting some of the aspects of Dōgen's appropriation of *Lotus Sūtra* styles of rhetoric in his own discourse. Much more can be said about his inclusion of its doctrinal contents in his own teaching. Still, Dōgen's primary literary source by far was the vast Chan *kōan* literature, which he was introducing as a new, foreign language into Japan, and which he had mastered to an astonishing degree. In his prominent use of the *Lotus Sūtra*, on the other hand, he was referencing the Buddhist text that was perhaps most familiar to his Kamakura audience. His wide use of the *Lotus Sūtra* raises many questions. His devoted dissemination of the

alien *kōan* literature suggests that he was not citing the *Lotus* simply to match audience expectations or familiarities. Some aspects of *Lotus* teaching were clearly useful to legitimatizing Zen positions. For example, he widely quotes the passage in Kumārajīva's translation of chapter two of the sūtra that "Only a buddha together with a buddha can fathom the reality of all existence."[46] Dōgen appropriates this saying for his *Shōbōgenzō* essay "Yuibutsu Yobutsu" (Only Buddha and Buddha), as support for the Zen Dharma transmission tradition.[47] The *Lotus Sūtra* focus on Śākyamuni also fits with the main buddha figure in Zen, rather than the Buddhas Amitābha (Jpn. Amida) or Vairocana (Jpn. Birushana, or Dainichi) venerated in the contemporary Pure Land and Esoteric (and Kegon) movements. But perhaps most fundamentally, the significant presence of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Dōgen's teaching content and in his style of presentation may serve to remind us of the substantial underpinnings of Mahāyāna thought and practice in Sōtō Zen teachings.

Notes

1 For a discussion of some *Lotus Sūtra* references by Dōgen, and a list of some such citations, see Kagamishima Genryū, *Dōgen zenji to in'yō kyōten-goroku no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Mokujisha, 1965, pp. 121–137, and 217–219. A list of *Lotus Sūtra* references in Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* appears in Gudo Wafu Nishijima and Chodo Cross, trs, *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo*, Book 1, Woods Hole, MA: Windbell Publications, 1994, pp. 293–321.

2 Ryūichi Abé and Peter Haskell, trs, *Great Fool: Zen Master Ryōkan; Poems, Letters, and Writings*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996, p. xiii, see also p. 21.

3 For background on *hongaku* thought, see Ruben Habito, *Originary Enlightenment: Tendai Hongaku Doctrine and Japanese Buddhism*, Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1996; and Jacqueline Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999. For Saichō's appropriation of *sokushin jōbutsu* from the *Lotus Sūtra* story about the Dragon King's daughter, see Paul Groner, "The *Lotus Sūtra* and Saichō's Interpretation of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body," in George J. Tanabe Jr and Willa Jane Tanabe, eds, *The Lotus Sūtra in Japanese Culture*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989, pp. 53–74.

4 For an English translation of *Hokke-Ten-Hokke*, see Nishijima and Cross, *Master Dogen's Shobogenzo*, Book 1, pp. 203–220. I have also referred to an unpublished translation by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Michael Wenger.

5 Steven Heine, *Dōgen and the Kōan Tradition*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

6 See Yasunari Kawabata, *Japan the Beautiful and Myself*, Edward Seidensticker, tr., Tokyo: Kodansha, 1969; and Steven Heine, *The Zen Poetry of Dōgen*, Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1997.

7 See Yifa, "The Rules of Purity for the Chan Monastery: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui," PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1996, published as *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated*

Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002. The Chanyuan Qinggui was a major influence, quoted extensively by Dōgen, in his Eihei Shingi. See Taigen Dan Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, *Dōgen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community: A Translation of Eihei Shingi*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

8 See, for examples, Edward Conze, tr., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*, Bolinas: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973, pp. 15, 120–121; and Buddhist Text Translation Society, *Sūtra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*, Talmage, CA: Dharma RealmBuddhist University, 1982, pp. 69–71, 89–92, along with many other passages.

9 I am using the Chinese/Japanese edition of Kumārajīva's translation, *Myōhō Rengekyō*, 3 vols, Tokyo: Iwanamai Bunko, 1996. English translations consulted are Leon Hurvitz, tr., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1976; Bunno Kato, Yoshiro Tamura, and Kojiro Miyasaka, trs, *The Threefold Lotus Sūtra: Innumerable Meanings, The Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law, and Meditation on the Bodhisattva Universal Virtue*, New York: Weatherhill, 1975; and Burton Watson, tr., *The Lotus Sūtra*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

10 Introduction to Tanabe and Tanabe, p. 2.

11 *Jōdō*, literally "ascending the hall," referred to here as dharma hall discourses, were the major form of presentation in Song China Chan temples. They were often quite brief, given in the dharma hall with the teacher on the high seat on the altar and with the monks standing. Apparently they were the teaching form eventually favored by Dōgen, since he nearly stopped writing the longer essays of *Shōbōgenzō* after 1244, but continued using the formal *jōdō* talks, which were recorded in *Eihei Kōroku*, in training his monks at Eiheiji before his death in 1253.

12 References to *Eihei Kōroku* are from the earlier *monkaku* version (rather than Manzan's later edition) in Kosaka Kiyu and Suzuki Kakuzen, eds, *Dōgen Zenji Zenshu*, vols 3 and 4, Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1989. Translation from Taigen Dan Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, trs, *Dōgen's Extensive Record: A Translation of Eihei Kōroku*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, pp. 123–124.

13 Yunmen's response to a monk's question, "What is Buddha?" of *kanshiketsu* has been interpreted legitimately either as a dried shitstick, a standard implement that was used as we now use toilet paper, or simply as a dried turd, an interpretation derived from Zhuangzi's usage, which will be used as the translation in other *jōdō* below, according to varied contexts. Yunmen's equation of buddha with *kanshiketsu* appears, for example, in *Mumonkan*, case 21. See Kōun Yamada, *Gateless Gate*, Los Angeles: Center Publications, 1967, pp. 109–112. For a discussion of Dōgen's likely interpretation of Dongshan Shouchu's utterance as "sesame" rather than the usual translation of "flax," see the note to Dōgen's reference to it in "Tenzokyōkun" in Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Pure Standards*, p. 56. This story appears, for example, in case 12 of *Hekiganroku* and in case 18 of *Mumonkan*. See Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary, trs, *The Blue Cliff Record*, Boston: Shambhala, 1977, pp. 81–87; and Yamada, pp. 96–99.

14 Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, p. 124.

15 Ibid., pp. 93–94.

16 See Watson, p. 45; Hurvitz, p. 45; Kato, Tamura, and Miyasaka, p. 74.

17 William LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, p. 87.

18 Hurvitz, pp. 29–30.

19 LaFleur, p. 87.
20 Stone, p. 14.
21 See Norman Waddell and Masao Abe, trs, "*Shōbōgenzō* Buddha-nature," in *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002, pp. 61–65.
22 Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 111–112.
23 George J. Tanabe Jr, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 9.
24 Ibid., p. 5.
25 Ibid., p. 13.
26 See Taigen Dan Leighton and Kazuaki Tanahashi, trs, "Within a Dream Expressing a Dream," in Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed., *Enlightenment Unfolds: The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Dōgen*, Boston: Shambhala, 1999, pp. 165–172.
27 Ibid., p. 166.
28 Ibid., p. 167.
29 Kazuaki Tanahashi, ed., *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen*, San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985, p. 69.
30 For Myōe's dream journal, and commentary, see Tanabe, and Hayao Kawaii, *The Buddhist Priest Myōe: A Life of Dreams*, Mark Unno, tr., Venice, CA: The Lapis Press, 1992.
31 See Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.
32 For further discussion of the stereotypical distinctions between Keizan and Dōgen, see Faure, pp. 3–4, 211–215.
33 Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds*, pp. 170–171; and Hurvitz, pp. 223–224.
34 I am indebted for clarification of the difference in Dōgen's reading of this passage, and for many other suggestions for this chapter, to the kind response commentary of Jan Nattier.
35 Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds*, p. 171.
36 Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 232–233.
37 The *Lotus Sūtra* includes a number of variations on the full formula for descriptions of buddhas and their buddha-fields parodied by Dōgen, also including versions in chapter twelve on Devadatta and chapter twenty-three on the Bodhisattva Medicine King. One of the versions closest to the full formula parodied by Dōgen is the description of Ananda's prediction in chapter nine. See Hurvitz, pp. 168–169.
38 Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 217–218. Dōgen refers frequently to ladles in *Eihei Kōroku*, used as a term for reliable practice implements, and sometimes for practitioners themselves. For other examples, *jōdō* 219 in 1247 begins, "Abundant with ten thousand virtues, the sitting cushions and wooden ladles are dignified." Ibid., p. 226. In *jōdō* 320 in 1249, Dōgen refers to Śākyamuni himself as, "The wooden ladle at Vulture Peak." Ibid., pp. 293–294.
39 Faure, p. 116.
40 Leighton and Okumura, *Dōgen's Extensive Record*, pp. 131–133.
41 Ibid., pp. 147–148.
42 See Thomas Cleary, tr., *Book of Serenity*, 1990, reprinted Boston: Shambhala, 1998, pp. 332–334.
43 Ibid., p. 350.
44 For the iconographic forms of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, see Taigen Daniel Leighton, *Faces of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Archetypes and Their Modern Expression*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003, pp. 167–184; revised edition,

formerly published as *Bodhisattva Archetypes: Classic Buddhist Guides to Awakening and their Modern Expression*, New York: Penguin Arkana, 1998.

45 Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds*, p. 169.

46 See Kato, Tamura, and Miyasaka, p. 52. Compared to the Sanskrit original, which simply denotes plural "buddhas," Kumārajīva's rendition emphasizes the relational aspect of a buddha "together with" a buddha.

47 See Tanahashi, *Moon in a Dewdrop*, pp. 161–167.

11

EMPTY-HANDED, BUT NOT EMPTY-HEADED

Dōgen's *kōan* strategies

Steven Heine

According to a frequently cited passage in the *Eihei Kōroku*, Dōgen returned to Japan from his travels in China in fall 1227 "empty-handed" (Jpn. *kūshu-genkyō*); that is, without having collected the material artifacts of Buddhism – such as icons, sūtras, relics, and regalia – that preoccupied so many of the other Japanese monks who visited China.[1] Instead, he came back only with his experience of awakening and understanding of the dharma. Echoing Dōgen's own claims, Hee-Jin Kim writes, "Unlike other Buddhists who had previously studied in China, Dōgen brought home with him no sūtras, no images, and no documents. His sole 'souvenir' presented to his countrymen was his own body and mind, his total existence, which was now completely liberated and transformed. He himself was the surest evidence of Dharma."[2]

Yet Dōgen's literary records show that on his return he was by no means empty-headed (although he may have had a head full of emptiness). Indeed, Dōgen came back to Japan with a remarkable familiarity and facility with diverse genres of Zen writings – *kōan* collections, recorded sayings texts, transmission of the lamp hagiographies, and monastic regulations – that he used critically and creatively in his sermons and other works. Dōgen's great and profound knowledge of Chinese Chan literature, especially *kōan* records, is symbolized by the legend of the "One Night Blue Cliff Record" (Jpn. *Ichiya Hekiganroku*) that he supposedly copied, guided by the Hakusan deity, just before he left China. The question of the authenticity of the "One Night Blue Cliff Record" has been much debated. It is clear that the reporting of this event developed in Dōgen hagiographies at a rather late date, thus tending to deny the veracity of the account.[3] Yet a *Blue Cliff Record* manuscript probably in Dōgen's own hand, long kept secret and held for centuries by the Sōtō sect, was inspected by D. T. Suzuki and others in modern times. Although it differs in the sequence and some of the wording

of the cases from conventional versions of the text, it is clearly the same *Blue Cliff Record*.[4] The impact of the legend – whether or not he actually ever copied the *Blue Cliff Record* – is to highlight the fact that Dōgen deserves primary credit for introducing the *kōan* tradition to Japan. This was expressed through a variety of texts he produced in the first half of the thirteenth century, which was just after the peak period of the creation of *kōan* collections in Song China.

The real proof of Dōgen's mastery and importation of the *kōan* tradition of Song China is his extensive and creative use of dozens of *kōan* cases throughout his collected writings, especially the *Shōbōgenzō* and *Eihei Kōroku*.[5] The use of *kōan*s by Dōgen after his return to Japan can be analyzed in terms of several stages leading up to the development of a uniquely innovative approach to *kōan* interpretation.[6] One of his earliest works, the *Shōbōgenzō* "Genjōkōan" fascicle, written as an epistle to a lay disciple from Kyushu in 1233, uses *kōan*s in two distinctive ways. First, its title highlights the doctrine that appears in some Song texts about the "clear cut" (Jpn. *genjō*) *kōan*, or the true meaning of *kōan*s disclosed in everyday practice, although this notion is not explicitly discussed in the main body of the fascicle. Second, "Genjōkōan" cites a relatively obscure *kōan* case on the relation between waving a fan and the circulation of the wind at the conclusion of the fascicle as a way of illustrating a philosophical argument about the inseparability of everyday activity and fundamental reality.

Some of Dōgen's other early writings, such as "Bendōwa" (1231), "Fukanzazengi" (1233), and "Gakudōyōjinshū" (1234), however, do not cite or refer to *kōan* cases. In the first eight years of his career following his return from China there is little evidence of a strong interest in *kōan*s or an indication of what was about to happen. But, beginning in the mid-1230s, Dōgen became immersed in transmitting and interpreting *kōan*s for his Japanese monks, although this may have been inspired in part by the arrival of the Chinese monk Jakuen, who had been his Dharma brother at Tiantong temple in China. In 1235 Dōgen produced the *Mana Shōbōgenzō* (or *Shōbōgenzō sanbyakusoku*) collection of more than three hundred *kōan*s without commentary, and in 1236 he produced a collection of four-line verse commentaries (Jpn. *juko*) on ninety cases included as the ninth volume of the *Eihei Kōroku*.[7] He also cited numerous *kōan*s and related anecdotes in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* record of his teachings collected by Ejō between 1236 and 1238.[8]

At this early juncture, Dōgen's approach to interpreting *kōan*s was not particularly novel or unique, although one finds flashes of innovation in the *juko*, or verse, commentaries in the *Eihei Kōroku* as well as the prose commentaries in the *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki*. The following example, "A snake appears in the relic box," is a *kōan*-like anecdote from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* that Dōgen comments on to deliver a message regarding the appropriateness of devotional rituals and morality:

> A monk was always carrying around with great reverence a golden image of the Buddha and other relics. Even when in the assembly hall or dormitory, he constantly burned incense to them and showed his respect with prostrations and offerings. One day the Zen master said, "The Buddha image and relics that you are worshiping will be of no use to you later." The monk disagreed.
>
> The master continued, "This is the handiwork of demons. You must get rid of these items at once." The monk grew indignant and started walking off. The master called after him, "Open your box and look inside." When the upset monk stopped and looked in the box, he found a poisonous snake coiled inside.[9]

The narrative culminates in a compelling element of melodrama and surprise when the true identity of the snake is revealed to the monk. The supernatural appearance of the snake is evoked, deliberately yet ironically in *setsuwa*-fashion, to defeat an attachment to a devotional ritual that has become merely superstitious. This approach to overcoming illusion is an example of "using poison to counteract poison," to cite a prominent Zen saying about the function of *kōan*s.

This case also has important implications for understanding the role of rituals in Zen, especially with regard to worship of the Buddha in various halls in the monastic compound. The basic aim in the development of the Zen school's approach to religious training was a transition from attachment to devotion and worship to practice of meditation and contemplation. There was also a transition from venerating images of the Buddha as an otherworldly symbol of enlightenment to respecting and honoring the temple abbot or master as a concrete, here-and-now, this-worldly appearance of a "living Buddha." These transitions also involved a shift from the buddha hall as the primary site in the monastery to the dharma hall, where the master delivered his daily round of sermons. The rules attributed to Baizhang call for eliminating the buddha hall from the Zen monastic compound and replacing it with the dharma hall alone. Dōgen's commentary is rather neutral. His own temple, Eiheiji, had both a buddha hall and a dharma hall. Dōgen is by no means entirely dismissive of the devotional worship of images and relics, which he admits have value in representing the power of the Buddha and delivering the devotee from the effects of evil karma. Yet he also argues, "expecting enlightenment by worshiping icons is an error that leads you into the hands of demons and poisonous snakes."

It seems clear that the texts of the mid-1230s – the *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, *Eihei Kōroku*, and *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* – served a preparatory function in creating a vast repository of *kōan* cases that had been culled from at least a dozen of the major Chinese *kōan* anthologies, recorded sayings, and transmission of the lamp collections, especially the *Zongmen tongyao zhi*[10] (Jpn. *Shūmon tōyōshū*).[11] By 1240, Dōgen's unique approach became evident in

many of the fascicles of the *Shōbōgenzō*, and throughout the decade he continued to interpret in often innovative and insightful ways dozens of cases in the sermons of both the *Shōbōgenzō* and the *Eihei Kōroku*. Several *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, originally delivered as informal *jishu*-style sermons, are devoted largely or in some cases entirely to one or several specific *kōan* cases. These include "Kokyō" on "Mazu polishing a tile," and other cases dealing with the image of a mirror; "Kattō" on "Bodhidharma's 'skin, flesh, bones, marrow'"; "Busshō" on "Zhaozhou's 'Mu'," among other *kōan*s; "Daishugyō" and "Jinshin inga" on "Baizhang and the wild fox"; "Mitsugo" on "Śākyamuni holding up a flower"; and "Osaku sendaba" on "The King asks for *saindhava*." Also, many of the *Eihei Kōroku* passages, delivered as formal *jōdō*-style sermons, deal extensively with *kōan* cases.

In many instances, *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles treat lesser known or relatively obscure passages of encounter dialogues (Jpn. *kien-mondō*) cited from transmission of the lamp histories as *kōan* cases, as in "Raihaitokuzui" on "Moshan opens her mouth"; "Dōtoku" on "A hermit's 'The mountain torrent runs deep, so the ladle is long'"; "Sesshin sesshō" on "Dongshan's 'Disclosing mind, disclosing nature'"; "Ikkya myōjū" on "One luminous pearl"; "Jinzū" on "Guishan turns his face to the wall"; "Tajinzū" on "The Tripiṭaka monk claims to read others' minds"; and "Kankin" on "Zhaozhou reciting the sūtras." Dōgen's intensive discussions of previously obscure cases, or cases beyond the scope of the standard Song *kōan* collections, expands the definition and the range of what constitutes *kōan* records. Dōgen was eager to introduce the lexicon of Chinese Chan literature (expressing the teaching of his Chan lineage) so quickly and dramatically at this critical juncture in the history of Zen Buddhism in Japan, and he took the liberty of selecting encounter dialogues he considered particularly relevant for his audience.

At the same time, in doing this, Dōgen's texts served not merely as a static repository of both well known and lesser known *kōan*s. Perhaps the major feature of Dōgen's approach to this body of literature is his vigorous and sustained interpretive effort to modify the rhetorical and narrative structures of numerous *kōan*s and thereby to alter the outcome and meaning of these cases. For example, according to Dōgen, Huangbo did not deserve to slap Baizhang in the epilogue to the "fox *kōan*," Mazu was correct in sitting still to become a buddha in "polishing a tile," and Huike's response was not superior to the other disciples of the first patriarch in "Bodhidharma's 'skin, flesh, bones, marrow'." Dōgen's hermeneutic method lessens the gap between a case as a textual paradigm and the interpretive process, as well as between the winner and loser of the encounter. His approach, which turns the structure of cases upside down and inside out, does violence to conventional readings. These revisionist interventions parallel the unsettling gestures of slapping, shouting, cutting, and leaping that are often contained in *kōan* narratives, and thereby extends and refines the game of one-upmanship that

pervades the encounter dialogue genre.[12] For Dōgen, the loser may well be the winner and the winner often wins by losing, yet losing is not really winning. Or, the winner may really lose by winning, or no one either wins or loses – in the end, either no contestant, or at the other extreme everyone involved, is at once both correct and/or incorrect.

An example of Dōgen's method is his reading of "Huangbo's single staff,"[13] which is based on the symbolism of the Zen staff. According to this case, Huangbo said while giving instructions to the assembly, "The ancient Venerables of all directions are all located on the tip of my staff," and one of the monks prostrated himself. Some time later, this monk went to the place where Dashu was staying and told him about what Huangbo had said. Master Dashu remarked, "Huangbo may have said that, but has he actually met all the Venerables in the ten directions?" The monk returned to Huangbo and told him about Dashu's comment. Huangbo reaffirmed his position: "What I previously said has already become famous throughout the world."

Some time later master Langyan remarked, "Dashu seemed to have excellent perception but he was really blind. The single staff of Huangbo could not be broken even if everyone in the world chewed on it." In other words, Langyan is skeptical of Dashu's critique of Huangbo. However, in his characteristic approach of rewriting encounter dialogues the way he feels they could or should have developed, Dōgen challenges and suggests reversing Langyan's critical comments.[14] Agreeing with Dashu, Dōgen asks, "Why didn't Langyan say, 'Huangbo's staff can be broken as soon as everyone in the world sets about trying to break it'?"

When Dōgen intercedes and alters the rhetoric or the narrative of a *kōan* in order to drastically reinterpret the outcome of the case, what is the underlying point he is trying to make about what a *kōan* means and what are the techniques he uses to make his argument? What is the relation between his style or methods and the conclusions or aims of his interpretation? Does he, in the final analysis, support a position of radical relativism and the indecipherability of truth claims? An analysis of various examples of Dōgen's strategies indicates that there does not appear to be a single, underlying aim or agenda, such as promoting a philosophy of relativism. Instead, he reinterprets *kōan*s to support several different didactic and metaphysical positions concerning the doctrines, rituals, and practices of Zen monastic life.

Rhetorical and narrative strategies

Dōgen uses a variety of strategies to alter the rhetorical and/or narrative structure of *kōan*s in order to provide a way to diverge from the conventional interpretations of the case. The most extreme example is when Dōgen deftly rewrites the case of Mazu polishing the tile. In the original version

Mazu appears to be struggling to gain enlightenment when he is criticized by his teacher Nanyue for prolonged sitting in meditation, which is likened to the attempt to make a mirror by polishing a tile.[15] But in Dōgen's version he is already enlightened at the time of their conversation. This reverses the conventional interpretation that Mazu is foolhardy in his vain effort to sit in *zazen*, an approach that emphasizes sudden awakening and the futility of continual cultivation. According to Dōgen:

> When polishing a tile becomes a mirror, Mazu becomes a buddha. When Mazu becomes a buddha, Mazu immediately becomes Mazu. When Mazu becomes Mazu, *zazen* becomes *zazen*. That is why the tradition of making a mirror by polishing a tile has been perpetuated through the bones and marrow of the ancient buddhas. That being the case, there is an ancient mirror [Jpn. *kokyō*] by virtue of the act of polishing [a tile].[16]

Dōgen's rewriting of the case justifies his emphasis on the practice of just-sitting as the unity of practice–cultivation, and enlightenment (Jpn. *shushō ittō*), and his method illustrates the interconnectedness of interpretive style and substance, as well as philosophy and polemics.

Dōgen uses two main rhetorical techniques: atomization, which involves breaking down key passages into their basic linguistic components of individual *kanji* or *kanji*-compounds and analyzing or rearranging the lexical components of speech;[17] and capping phrases (Jpn. *jakugo*), which is the composition of brief, pithy, and allusive commentaries on particular words or passages in *kōan* cases.[18] An example of a capping phrase is a two-line *kanbun* verse Dōgen wrote as a comment on the contradictory sayings attributed to Mazu in two *kōan*s dealing with the doctrine of Mind as an indicator of fundamental reality, one asserting that "Mind itself is Buddha" and the other offering the negation "No Mind, no Buddha."[19] According to Dōgen's verse:

> "Mind itself is Buddha" – difficult to practice, but easy to explain
> "No mind, no Buddha" – difficult to explain, but easy to practice.[20]

The method of atomization is seen in several prominent *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, especially "Sesshin sesshō," "Shinfukatoku," "Sokushin zebutsu," and "Muchū setsumu." In this approach Dōgen twists and turns the meaning of words by taking them out of their original context, and then isolating and changing or reversing their meaning, followed by reinserting them back into the *kōan* narrative now seen in a new conceptual light. A key example focuses on a case known as Dongshan's "Disclosing mind, disclosing nature," in which Dongshan reveals an affinity with death. This *kōan* is included in Dōgen's *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case number 62[21] and is also the

basis of an entire *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle, Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Sesshin sesshō."[22] The *kōan* record revolves around several subtle wordplays. One time when Dongshan was traveling with Shenshan Sengmi, whose name literally means "mountain god," he pointed to a roadside temple and said, "There is someone inside the temple who is disclosing mind, and disclosing nature." The way this transpires suggests a mysterious intuition that connects Dongshan to the preacher in the chapel. The term used for "disclosing" (Jpn. *setsu*) can also be translated as "explaining," "preaching," or "giving discourse," and the terms "mind" (Jpn. *shin*) and "nature" (Jpn. *shō*) are often used interchangeably to refer to the fundamental level of reality.

Shenshan responds "Who is it?," which could be interpreted as a simple, innocent question or could be rendered as the philosophical declarative "It is who." Here "who" would be a positive name for the open quality of unimpeded, ultimate identity, beyond attachment or identification. Using a common interrogative in such a positive sense is a strategy not uncommon in Zen *kōan* discourse, and especially for Dōgen. Dongshan then says, "When I just heard your simple question, elder brother, I attained a state of perfect death," indicating a condition of deep meditation beyond the dichotomy of life and death. Shenshan asks, "Who is disclosing mind, and disclosing nature?," which, again, could be understood as a declarative, "The one disclosing mind and disclosing nature is who." In response to the question Dongshan says, "It is he who is alive within the realm of death."

In his extensive commentary on this relatively obscure case, Dōgen continues the wordplay through an atomization that divides the act of disclosure into four categories represented by his characteristic literary technique of changing the order of characters in a four-character phrase: "disclosing mind of no person," "no person disclosing mind," "disclosing mind is itself the person," and "this person itself is disclosing mind." Because of his religio-philosophic views and perhaps in line with a sectarian agenda, Dōgen praises the handling of Sengshan's questions by Dongshan (one of the founders of his Sōtō lineage). Dōgen criticizes Linji (founder of the rival Rinzai sect) for reifying a duality between mind and nature, in which mind represents evanescent individuality and nature symbolizes substantive universality.

Dōgen's approach to altering the narrative structure of *kōan*s involves interceding in or extending the original narrative as well as presenting a demythological interpretation of supernatural elements in the narrative. An example of interceding in the narrative structure is found in Dōgen's interpretation of the following case, "A Hermit's 'The mountain torrent runs deep, so the ladle is long'":

> A monk built a hermitage at the foot of Mount Xuefeng and lived there for many years practicing meditation but without having his head shaved. Making a wooden ladle, the solitary monk drew and drank water from a mountain torrent.

One day, a monk from the monastery at the top of the mountain visited the hermit and asked, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?" The hermit responded, "The mountain torrent runs deep, so the handle of a wooden ladle must be appropriately long." The monk reported this to the master of Xuefeng temple, who declared, "He sounds like a strange character, perhaps an anomaly. I'd better go at once and check him out for myself."

The next day, master Xuefeng went to see the hermit while carrying a razor and was accompanied by his attendant monk. As soon as they met he said, "If you can express the Way, I won't shave your head." On hearing this, the hermit at first was speechless. But then he used the ladle to bring water to have his head washed, and Xuefeng shaved the hermit's head.

Verse commentary

If someone asks the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the West,
It is that the handle of a wooden ladle is long, and the ravine is just as deep;
If you want to know the boundless meaning of this,
Wait for the wind blowing in the pines to drown out the sound of *koto* strings.

This *kōan* is cited in the *Eihei Kōroku*,[23] and is also included in the *Mana Shōbōgenzō*.[24] Although it does not appear in the major Song *kōan* collections, the case is contained in a wide variety of sources including other transmission of the lamp records, especially the *Zongmen tongyao zhi*[25] and the *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*,[26] as well as the *Zhengfa yanzeng* (Jpn. *Shōbōgenzō*) *kōan* collection of master Dahui. In addition to citing it in the *Eihei Kōroku* and *Mana Shōbōgenzō* collections, Dōgen discusses the case in several Kana *Shōbōgenzō* fascicles, including "Gyōji," "Bodaisatta shishōbō," and especially "Dōtoku."

In an extensive discussion in *Shōbōgenzō* "Dōtoku," Dōgen characteristically alters the significance of the hermit's status by remarking that Xuefeng should not and would not have asked or expected the irregular practitioner to "express the way" (Jpn. *dōtoku*), unless he already knew that the hermit was enlightened. Unlike his interpretation of a case cited below in which he asserts the literal meaning of the dialogue that refutes the Tripiṭaka monk's supranormal powers, this time Dōgen reverses the literal standpoint in both the *Eihei Kōroku* verse commentary and the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* prose commentary by arguing that the hermit should not be considered a *pratyekabuddha* (a buddha who remains in seclusion and does not teach the dharma) and should be acknowledged for his authentic spiritual status.

Although Dōgen accepts the hermit's authenticity, he also agrees that the silent response indicates the superiority of Xuefeng despite the hermit's considerable spiritual attainment. Xuefeng earns the right to be testing and domesticating the hermit. The *Eihei Kōroku* verse commentary steers away from endorsing or disputing the spiritual powers of the irregular practitioner, who has been adopted through the master's administration of the tonsure into the legitimate Zen lineage.

Another approach to altering the narrative structure is the technique of demythologization, which changes the focus and direction of the reading of the text. As used in this context, demythologizing refers to the conceptual process of seeing through the mythical, legendary, or fantastic imagery in a *kōan* record, and focusing on the inner meaning or existential significance underlying the symbolism, which may on the surface seem to support the existence of a mythological realm. This approach is seen in Dōgen's interpretation of "Guishan turns his face to the wall," another rather obscure *kōan* that became the basis for a lengthy discussion in the *Shōbōgenzō*. The original case deals with the interpretation of a master's dream by two disciples:

> Guishan was lying down one day when he was approached by Yangshan with a question. The master, still lying down, turned his back to Yangshan. Yangshan asked, "Why do you behave like that with one of your disciples?" As the master started to stand up, Yangshan went to leave the room. The master called out, and Yangshan turned his head. The master said, "Let me tell you about a dream. Please listen." Yangshan lowered his head and listened to the master's dream. The master said, "Please interpret the dream for me." Yangshan took a bowl of water and a towel to the master. The master scrubbed his face, and then sat for a while.
>
> Then Xiangyan came into the room. The master said, "Just now Yangshan demonstrated a supreme ability in supranormal powers. This ability is not like that of the Hīnayānists." Xiangyan said, "I was in the other room, but I clearly perceived this." The master said, "Now it's your turn to interpret." Xiangyan made a cup of tea and brought it to the master.
>
> Then the master said, "You two disciples have supranormal powers that are beyond the abilities of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.

This *kōan*, which was contained in *Jingde chuandeng lu*[27] and other transmission of the lamp records such as the *Zongmen tongyao ji*[28] and the *Zongmen lian-deng hui-yao*,[29] is cited in *Mana Shōbōgenzō*[30] and is also discussed extensively in the Kana *Shōbōgenzō*.[31] Unlike other *kōan*s, such as "The sermon from the third seat"[32] in which Yangshan's dream of bodhisattva realms is fanciful and mythical, the responses to the dream imagery alluded

to here has an esoteric quality. Guishan's dream, whose contents are unstated but that Yangshan is asked to interpret, becomes the basis for a possible intuitive, occult connection between master and disciple, who are especially known for their strong emotional attachment as the core members of the Gui-Yang house or lineage. The content and nature of the dream itself is never disclosed, and this heightens the sense of mystery and uncertainty surrounding the oneiric experience as well as Yangshan's interpretation of it.

The challenge and responses, however ironic, occur in the context of a tradition in which it was taken for granted that masters and disciples enjoyed a distinctive intuitive bond. In some of the more prominent examples, second patriarch Huike was led to find Bodhidharma by the vision of a spirit, Juzhi established his connection with the master who taught him the One Finger method through a dream, and Dōgen was led to discover his mentor in China by a dream that took place at a time of disillusionment when he was on the verge of returning prematurely to Japan. Yet in Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Jinzū" Dōgen offers a thoroughly demythological interpretation of the current case by arguing that the so-called supranormal powers are minor abilities compared to the genuine mystical insight of a disciple receiving transmission into the teachings of his master. Dōgen evokes the saying attributed to Layman Pang that genuine supranormal powers are nothing other than "carrying water and chopping wood."

The case of "Deshan and the woman selling rice cakes" is an example of an interpretation at once extending the narrative structure and atomizing the rhetorical structure. The *kōan* itself is based on a pun. The ordinary term for rice cakes is *dian xin*, but the literal meaning of *dian xin* is "mind refreshment." The case deals with Deshan's comeuppance at the hands of an elderly lay woman:

> Deshan was traveling to the south in search of the Dharma when he came across a woman on the roadside selling refreshments and asked, "Who are you?" She responded, "I am an old woman selling rice cakes." He said, "I'll take some rice cakes." She said, "Venerable priest, why do you want them?" He said, "I am hungry and need some refreshments (Ch. *dian xin*, Jpn. *ten-shin*)."
>
> She said, "Venerable priest, what are you carrying in your bag?" He said, "Haven't you heard I am 'King of the Diamond Sūtra'? I have thoroughly penetrated all of its levels of meaning. Here I have my notes and commentaries on the scripture."
>
> Hearing this the old woman said, "I have one question. Venerable priest, may I ask it?" He said, "Go ahead and ask it." She stated, "I have heard it said that according to the Diamond Sūtra, past mind is ungraspable (Ch. *xin pu hua de*, Jpn. *shinfukatoku*), present mind is ungraspable, and future mind is ungraspable.

> So, where is the mind (Ch. *hsin*, Jpn. *shin*) that you wish to refresh (Ch. *dian*, Jpn. *ten*) with rice cakes? Venerable priest, if you can answer, I will sell you a rice cake. But if, venerable priest, you cannot answer, I will not sell you any rice cake."
>
> Deshan was struck speechless, and the old woman got up abruptly and left without selling Deshan a single rice cake.[33]

Dōgen's commentary tries to reverse the conventional understanding by criticizing the woman as well as Deshan. Dōgen points out that while Deshan thought that he was "checking out" the old woman, it turned out that she had checked him out and found him wanting. He challenges Deshan for not asking in response to her query, "I cannot answer your question, what would you say?" But Dōgen then suggests that she should have said, "Venerable priest, if you cannot answer my question, try asking me a question to see if I can answer you." He is quite critical of the old woman as well as those who automatically praise her handling of Deshan. According to Dōgen, it is not clear that the woman is enlightened – she is a marginal figure who can challenge Zen monks, but should not be considered the equal of a Zen master. Here Dōgen seems reluctant to sanction the authority of a laywoman. However, in his interpretation of a story in the *Shōbōgenzō* essay "Raihaitokuzui,"[34] he praises a nun, and attacks monks who deny her abilities, or legitimacy.

Through a combination of atomization and narrative extension, Dōgen argues that Deshan should have said, "If you say so, then don't bother to sell me any rice cakes." Or, to be even more effective, he could have turned the tables on the woman by inquiring, "As past mind is ungraspable, present mind is ungraspable, and future mind is ungraspable, where is the mind that now makes the rice cakes used for refreshment?" Then, the woman would confront Deshan by saying, "You know only that one cannot refresh the mind with a rice cake. But you do not realize that the mind refreshes the rice cake, or that the mind refreshes [or liberates] the mind." And just as Deshan is feeling overwhelmed and bewildered she would continue, "Here is one rice cake each for the past ungraspable mind, the present ungraspable mind, and the future ungraspable mind." If he should fail to reach out his hand to take the rice cakes, she should slap him with one of the cakes and say, "You ignorant fool, don't be so absent-minded." Dōgen concludes by arguing, "Therefore, neither the old woman nor Deshan was able to adequately hear or express the past ungraspable mind, the present ungraspable mind, or the future ungraspable mind." Yet, despite Dōgen's playful, probing critique of the old woman, it seems clear that she has prevailed over the monk with one of the most effective puns in the history of Zen literature, which is replete with diverse styles of wordplay, punning on the ordinary word for rice cakes, *dian xin*, literally meaning "mind refreshment."

On reinterpreting the outcome of *kōan* narratives

In reinterpreting and reversing the conventional reading of the *kōan* cases, what is Dōgen's point? Does he espouse an underlying philosophy of relativism, in which the outcome of every case can invariably be examined from diverse perspectives with no clear winner in the contest? Or do we find a different approach advocated for each of the cases, so that in some instances a winner can be upheld, although this may vary from the conventional view? In other words, in the *kōan* tradition itself, apparent "winners" and "losers" may not actually be so, and in Dōgen's commentaries conventional views of *kōan* "victors" are often further undercut. But does Dōgen's approach to *kōan*s have a single main agenda or a variable series of references?

My analysis suggests that Dōgen's approach can be understood in terms of two overriding and interrelated themes: didactic concerns with moral and ritual issues in the monastic system, including communal labor, asceticism, continual cultivation, gender, and the role of scriptures and sermons; and metaphysical concerns with crafting a doctrine of nonduality or the equalization of all views based on the notions of emptiness and the use of expedient pedagogical means. Some of the conclusions Dōgen seeks to show are evident in the cases cited above; for example, his support for an irregular practitioner, critique of the female opponent of Deshan, advocacy of demythology, and refutation of a reliance on silence over scriptures. The cases cited below reveal more fully diverse components of Dōgen's approach to reinterpreting the outcome of encounter dialogues.

A key example of didacticism is found in Dōgen's interpretation of an obscure case, "Nanquan sweeping on a mountain," emphasizing a "let us cultivate our garden" ethic that evokes Baizhang's "no work, no food" injunction:

> One day Nanquan was doing his chores and sweeping work on the mountain. A monk approached him and asked, "Tell me the way to get to Mount Nanquan." Nanquan raised his sickle and said, "I bought this for thirty cents." The monk retorted, "I did not ask about the price of the sickle. What I asked about was the path to Mount Nanquan."
>
> Nanquan said, "Now, let me get back to chopping down weeds."

Verse commentary

> The novice came and went on Mount Nanquan,
> But, in trying to reach the peak, he had a wonderful experience,
> He heard Nanquan's remark about the sickle and it affected him deeply,
> We should keep listening to this dialogue for years to come.[35]

This *kōan* focuses on the importance of communal labor in the self-definition of the Southern school during its formative period in Tang China. A wandering monk – referred to in the verse commentary as a "novice" (literally "water and clouds") – sees Nanquan and, apparently without recognizing him, asks the way to the master's mountain. His asking for the mountain means the same as if he were asking for the person. The monk does not expect that an abbot would be engaged in manual labor, and so he does not realize that he has just met the master he is looking for. When the monk does not get the point of Nanquan's initial response that emphasizes the importance of working hard with simple tools, the master dismisses the wanderer and gets back to his chore of chopping down weeds. Note that the master's indirect reproach is not the kind of harsh verbal or physical reprimand one might expect, and the last line of the case might be interpreted as Nanquan seeing some awareness in the monk. Dōgen's verse commentary suggests that the monk was affected, and probably did have an experience of sudden awakening stemming from this encounter.

Dōgen's highlighting of yet another obscure *kōan*, "Xuansha's 'One luminous pearl'," focuses on the role of an irregular monk and the issue of demythologization in a case characterized by the winning of a game of one-upmanship over paradoxical expressions by a forest ascetic:

> A priest asked master Xuansha Zongyi of Fuzhou district, "I have heard that you often say, 'The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl.' How are we to understand the meaning of this?" Xuansha replied, "The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl. What is the point in trying to understand the meaning?"
>
> The next day Xuansha asked the priest, "The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl. How do you understand the meaning of this?" The priest said, "The whole universe in ten directions is one luminous pearl. What is the point in trying to understand the meaning of this?"
>
> Xuansha taunted him, "I see you have been struggling like a demon in the cave of a black mountain."[36]

According to traditional accounts, Xuansha throughout his career wore a patched robe made of coarse fiber that he mended but never replaced. With a minimum of formal training he eventually became the successor of Xuefeng and was known for his single-method teaching based on the phrase "one luminous pearl," which means that there is a jewel amid the dusty world of *saṃsāra* or that the *saṃsāric* world itself has a bright, jewel-like quality. The reference to the cave of demons, whether implying supernaturalism or anti-supernaturalism, or praise or criticism of the monk's attitude, must be understood in terms of an awareness that caves were the likely lair

of Xuansha, the forest ascetic. Dōgen's Kana *Shōbōgenzō* demythological prose commentary stresses a nondual outlook that legitimates the irregular practitioner, as in "Dōtoku" and *Eihei Kōroku*,[37] by asserting, "Forward steps and backward steps in a demon's black mountain cave are nothing other than 'one luminous pearl'."

In his interpretation of the obscure "Nanquan is greeted by the Earth-deity," Dōgen employs both a demythologization and a remythologization to argue for the need for continuing practice in a sectarian context:

> Nanquan happened to be traveling through a vegetable garden when the monk charged with stewarding the garden came prepared to greet him. Nanquan said, "I usually travel without being noticed. How is it that you were prepared to receive me?" The monk replied, "Because last night the Earth-deity [or protector-spirit of the monastery compound] informed me you would be coming by."
>
> Nanquan said, "I must be lacking in the power of spiritual cultivation. That is the only explanation for why the Earth-deity saw me." The monk said, "But you have already attained great wisdom. I do not understand why the Earth-deity could have seen you coming."
>
> Nanquan thought, "I'd better go and make an offering of rice to the Earth-deity."
>
> *Verse commentary*
>
> He once traveled freely, his presence unnoticed by others;
> He could not be distinguished from a god or demon;
> But finally caught, he confessed that he had lost his spiritual power,
> Though in the beginning his comings and goings were far from any crowd.[38]

The discursive function of the case, whether mythological or demythological, lies in the context in which it is cited and interpreted. For example, when used in transmission of the lamp texts such as the *Jingde chuandeng lu* it contributes to the genealogy of the master by establishing the authenticity of his credentials. The case is also mentioned in Dōgen's "Gyōji" fascicle, the closest his *Shōbōgenzō* writings come to the transmission of the lamp genre. He retells the history of his lineage in light of the doctrine of "sustained *zazen* practice" (Jpn. *gyōji*) which has the spiritual power to support buddhas and sentient beings, heaven and earth, self and other. Early in the fascicle, Dōgen refers to masters Jingjing and Yizhang as being notable because they cannot be perceived by the native gods. Then he contrasts Nanquan, who has been spotted, with Hongzhi, before whom a local deity is literally stopped in its tracks. The god's feet will not budge,

recalling the "immovable robe" in the legend of Hui-neng's escape from his opponents.[39]

On the one hand, Dōgen seems to be scoring a sectarian point on behalf of Hongzhi, a predecessor of his mentor Rujing, while denigrating a master from a rival Rinzai lineage. Up to this stage, Dōgen is operating within, though at the same time refashioning, the standard mythological framework. But he then rationalizes demythology by commenting that the real meaning of being seen or not seen lies not in supranormal power in the literal sense, but in the perpetuation of authentic discipline. This requires an ongoing process of detachment from, or casting off, conventional pursuits. Yet even Dōgen's turn to an anti-supernatural interpretation reveals an assumption of the efficacy of the indigenous spirit world. His verse commentary in the *Eihei Kōroku* version is basically noncommittal about – but certainly does not deny – the issue of supernatural realms or qualities involved here.

In highlighting and interpreting "Moshan opens her mouth," Dōgen returns to the issue of gender as also seen in "Shinfukatoku" discussed above and "Kankin" discussed below. The case emphasizes the role of a female practitioner who appears superior in both rank and wisdom to her male disciple:

> Zhixian was sent by his master, Linji, to study with Moshan. On their first meeting she asked, "Where have you come from?" Zhixian answered, "The Mouth of the Road" (the literal meaning of the name of his village). Moshan retorted, "Then why didn't you close your mouth when you came here?" Zhixian prostrated himself and became her disciple.
>
> Some time later he challenged her by asking, "What is the Summit of the Mountain" (the literal meaning of the name Moshan)? She replied, "The Summit of the Mountain cannot be seen." "Then who is the person on the mountain?," he demanded. "I am neither a male nor a female form," she responded. "Then," he asked, "why not transfigure into some other form?" "Since I am not a fox spirit, I cannot transfigure."
>
> Once again Zhixian bowed and decided to serve as supervisor of Moshan's temple garden for three years, proclaiming her teaching the equal of Linji.[40]

There are other versions of the narrative in various transmission of the lamp records that have different outcomes and ways of treating the question of whether the monk in the end defers to the authority and superiority of the nun, whose wisdom in denying both the ultimacy of gender discriminations and the need for spiritual transformations is expressed in ingenious wordplay.[41]

Dōgen devotes a complete fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* to the case of Moshan and related anecdotes about the role of nuns. While he is critical of some of

the "Zen grannies" who are lay and perhaps occult practitioners, as in his commentary on Deshan and the rice-cake, he defends Moshan, who is ordained, and severely attacks monks who reject the authority of women as "ignorant fools who deceive and delude secular people" and therefore "can never become bodhisattvas." Dōgen comments that he was struck by the "skin, flesh, bones, marrow" transmission story of first patriarch Bodhidharma, who interviewed four people, including a woman, before selecting his successor by transmitting his marrow, and Dōgen supports Moshan's authority.

However, several factors call into question whether Dōgen is entirely consistent in his acceptance of a lineal model for women. First, in other fascicles, particularly "Shukke kudoku" written late in his career, he tends to consider nuns unequal to men. Also, even in "Raihaitokuzui," he makes ironic references that might be interpreted as undercutting his support for women. For example, he announces that legitimate teachers can be found "whether man or woman, ancient or modern, stone pillars or shapeshifting foxes."

One of Dōgen's favorite cases, "Baizhang meditates on Daxiong peak" is used as a vehicle to enunciate his own views on monastic rituals, especially the priority of sermons: "A monk asked Baizhang, 'What is the most extraordinary thing?' Baizhang said, 'Sitting alone on Daxiong Peak.' The monk bowed, and Baizhang hit him."[42] This case gained prominence because it served as a topic for important commentaries by Dōgen and his Chinese mentor Rujing. Rujing reconsidered the leading query and rewrote the response as "It is only to eat rice in a bowl at Jingzu si temple on Mount Tiandong." He thereby shifted the focus from solitary *zazen* to everyday activities, as well as from Mount Baizhang to his own mountain temple.

Dōgen reflected on this case at least five times in his works. In the earlier writings, the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Kajō" and "Ho-u," he cites Rujing's comments approvingly. But during a later sermon, Dōgen spontaneously rewrote the case by raising his staff, then throwing it down, and stepping off the dais. Elsewhere he comments on the value of wielding the Zen stick, which metaphorically encompasses all aspects of reality.[43] According to the record of the sermon, "Dōgen said, 'I would answer by raising high my stick at Daibutsuji temple in Japan,' and he put the stick down and stepped off the dais." Several years later, he again rewrote the case with the remark that the most extraordinary thing is delivering sermons at Eiheiji temple, saying "I [Eihei abbot] will go to the lecture hall today."[44] Finally, he asserts, "It is attending *jōdō* [dharma hall] sermons on Kichijōzan [Eiheji]."[45] This is intriguing in that Dōgen is primarily known for his emphasis on *zazen* meditation through the doctrine of "just sitting" (Jpn. *shikan taza*) rather than for delivering sermons, whereas Baizhang is known for stressing sermons in his monastic rules text, which makes little mention of the need for sitting meditation. On the other hand, Dōgen often praised

Rujing for his charismatic sermons, and Dōgen himself gave nighttime sermons that became the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Kōmyō" and "Shohō jisso" fascicles.

While the *kōan*s discussed above focus on moral issues such as communal labor, continuing practice, and attitudes regarding gender, Dōgen's reading of "The Tripiṭaka monk claims to read others' minds" delivers a message about the role of supranormal powers in monastic life and also points to a philosophical doctrine of relativism:

> The Tripiṭaka master Daer came to the capital all the way from India and proclaimed, "I have the Dharma-eye that reads others' minds." Emperor Daizong ordered the National Teacher Huizhong to put him to a test. When the Tripiṭaka monk saw the National Teacher he at once bowed and stood to his right side.
>
> The National Teacher said, "Do you have the power to read others' minds?" The monk responded, "No, far from it." "Tell me where I am right now." "You are a National Teacher. How can you see the boat race in the West River?"[46]

Dōgen refutes what evolved as the typical interpretation – which seems to reverse the overt meaning of the dialogue – that the Tripiṭaka monk's first two answers are actually correct and that even the silent response in the third part of the dialogue may be considered acceptable. Dōgen considers several commentaries by leading masters that justify why the Tripiṭaka master was silent at the end of the encounter. For example, he discusses Zhaozhou's remark that the Tripiṭaka monk did not see the National Teacher in the third question because the master "was standing right on the monk's nostrils" and was therefore too close to be perceived. He also considers another comment that the National Teacher had gone into a state of profound absorption (Skt. samādhi) and was imperceptible to the monk. According to Dōgen, all of these are convoluted ways of trying to reconcile the monk's inability, and he returns to a literal reading of the case.

Dōgen maintains an iconoclastic view with several components. According to Dōgen, supranormal powers do not lead to and are not really the result of enlightenment, and therefore they are not comparable in merit to everyday activities and simple chores, such as chopping down weeds. Also, reading minds is symbolic of intuitive insight, which is beyond having or not having powers, and knowing about others is actually based on self-knowledge. Therefore, reading the mind of another can only take place on the basis of "reading one's own mind" (Jpn. *jijintsū*), or realizing one's true nature. The first two lines of Dōgen's verse commentary refer to similar situations of mindreading in other Zen dialogues or Chinese Buddhist anecdotes, and the final lines reiterate the National Teacher's critique of Daer as someone who is fundamentally deceptive.

Dōgen's interpretation of the "The World Honored One ascends the high seat" uses atomization in support of the equalization of all viewpoints:

Pointer

> A single lute string is plucked and he can name the whole tune. Such a person is hard to find even if you search for a thousand years. Like a hawk chasing a hare, the race goes to the swiftest. He expresses the universe of discourse in a single word, and condenses a thousand great worlds into a speck of dust. Is there anyone who can live the same way and die the same way, penetrating each and every hole and crevice? Now consider this.

Main case

> One day the World Honored One took the high seat to preach the Dharma. Mañjuśrī struck the gavel and said, "Clearly understand the Dharma of the King of Dharma. The Dharma of the King of Dharma is just like this."
>
> Then the World Honored One got down off his seat.

Prose commentary (selected passage)

> This took place before the World Honored One had raised the flower. From the beginning at Deer Park to the end at Hiranyavati River, how many times did he need to use the jeweled sword of the Diamond King? At this particular time, if there had been someone in the assembly with the true spirit of a patch-robed monk and with a supreme understanding, then it would have been possible to later avoid the sticky situation of having to raise the flower.[47]

Like numerous other commentaries on this case, including the *Biyan lu* and *Congrong lu*, Dōgen's discussion deals with the notion of *saindhava*, which evokes an ancient Sanskrit story of a king who asked his retainer for four items, a wash, a meal, a drink, and a ride, and is given in an immediate, intuitive response: water, salt, a chalice, and a horse, respectively. *Saindhava* refers to an intuitive connection between master and disciple, but the commentaries caution against understanding this in a literal or facile way. The *Biyan lu* mentions another *kōan*:

> When a monk asked Xiangyan, "What is the king asking for *saindhava*?," Xiangyan said, "Come over here," and the monk went. Xiangyan said, "Don't be such a fool!" The monk later asked Zhaozhou, "What is the king asking for *saindhava*?" Zhaozhou got off his meditation seat, bent over, and folded his hands.

Dōgen cites this account and also tells the irreverent story of Nanquan, who saw his disciple coming and decided to up the ante about *saindhava* by commanding him, "The pitcher is an object. It contains some water. Bring the water over to this old priest without moving the object. But the monk brought the pitcher to the master and poured water all over him." Dōgen distances himself from the ritual implications to monastic protocols and propriety, and comments exclusively on the metaphysical significance of this act, "We must study the water in the pitcher and the pitcher in the water. Was it the water that was being moved, or was it the pitcher that was being moved?"

Tours, détours, rétours

Dōgen's interpretation of the following *kōan*, "Zhaozhou recites the sūtras," demonstrates many of the elements previously discussed, including the strategies of atomization, narrative intercession and extension, and conclusions based on reinterpreting the meaning of ritual in light of the doctrines of relativism and multiperspectivism:

> In the district of Zhaozhou, an old woman sent a message to the master with a donation and a request that he recite the entire collection of Buddhist sūtras. Hearing of this, the master stepped down from his seat and walked around the chair one time. Then he said, "I have finished reciting the collection of sūtras."
>
> The messenger returned to the old woman and told her what happened with Zhaozhou. The old woman said, "I asked Zhaozhou to recite the complete collection of sūtras. Why did he recite only half the sūtras?"[48]

The main question Dōgen considers is whether Zhaozhou is really in the wrong, and how this affects our understanding of the role of recitation rituals in the monastic routine. He reverses the conventional interpretation of the case. Dōgen says that Zhaozhou walking around his chair really did represent the whole of the Buddhist sūtras, whereas the old woman was merely lost in her concern for the relative number of scriptures recited. At the same time, in contrast to this line of interpretation that is critical of the woman, Dōgen also suggests that perhaps the old woman really wanted to see Zhaozhou walk around the chair backwards, or in the opposite direction, to expose his appreciation of absurdity.

"Kankin" also contains several other versions of the narrative culled from the transmission of the lamp records. In one version master Shenchao of Mount Dasui in Yizhou also walks around the chair. But this time the old woman is criticized for not saying, "I asked him to recite the entire collection of the sūtras. Why did the master worry himself so much?" In another version, master Dongshan Wuben first bows to the messenger who returns

the bow, but then he walks around the chair with the officer and asks the officer if he understood. When the messenger replies "no," Dongshan says, "Why can't you understand that I have read a sūtra with you?" In a fourth version, Dōgen relates how his Chinese mentor Rujing, who was once asked to read a lengthy sūtra and deliver a sermon, drew a big circle in the air with his fly-whisk and said, "Now I have read it for you!" Then he cast away the fly-whisk and descended from the dais.

In the rest of the "Kankin" fascicle Dōgen spends time outlining and analyzing the precise way the ritual of sūtra reading is to be conducted, including minute details about preparing and serving food as well as the time and place for the reading. But he also discusses other dialogues that highlight the futility and absurdity of the ritual. These are the reversals and re-reversals, the *tours*, *détours*, *rétours* (turns, de-turns, returns) that characterize the use of *kōan*s in the Dōgen tradition. In one example that is particularly intriguing for its irreverent tone, master Yüeh-shan is known for forbidding the recitation of sūtras, yet one day is discovered reading a sūtra himself. When asked by a disciple why he is doing precisely what he does not allow others he responds, "I am only trying to cover my eyes with the sūtra!"

Dōgen does not have one fixed purpose, strategy, or methodology behind his reversals and re-readings of the *kōan* "scriptures." In the variety of his playful commentaries, he exhibits a range of innovative interpretive techniques aimed at exposing new meanings or facets in the classic stories.

Notes

1 *Eihei Kōroku* 1.48 in *Dōgen zenji zenshū*, 7 vols., Kawamura Kōdō et al., eds, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988–1993, 3:34, according to the Monkaku edition (in the Manzan edition this passage appears in *Eihei Kōroku* 1.1).
2 Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen – Mystical Realist*, 1975, rev. 3rd edn, with new foreword, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, p. 46.
3 Satō Shunkō, "Hakusan shinkō to Sōtō-shū kyō shi," 20-part series, *Sanshō*, 1990–1991, pp. 556–575.
4 Daitō, who was said to have copied the *Jingde chuandeng lu* in forty days, "must have been aware that he was not only transcribing the history of Zen but participating in it as well." Kennth Kraft, *Eloquent Zen: Daitō*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993, p. 48.
5 Kagamishima Genryū, ed., *Dōgen in'yō goroku no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1995.
6 Some of the discussions of cases also appear in Steven Heine, *Opening a Mountain: Kōans of the Zen Masters*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
7 Taigen Dan Leighton and Shohaku Okumura, trs, *Dōgen's Extensive Record: A Translation of the Eihei Kōroku*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004, pp. 537–598.
8 Ishii Seijun, "*Mana Shōbōgenzō* no seiritusu kansuru isshiken: 'Eihei juko,'" Kōshōji goroku to no naiyō taihi o chūshin toshite, *Sōtōshū shūgaku kenkyūjō kiyō*, 8:53–67.

9 *Shōbōgenzō zuimonki* (hereafter SZ), vol. 2 record 1, in *Dōgen zenji zenshū* (hereafter DZZ), 7 vols, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988–1993, 7:64.
10 *Zongmen tongyao zhi*, photo-fascimilie edition held in Komazawa University Library collection of Zen Buddhist texts.
11 Ishii Shūdō, *Sōdai Zenshūshi no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1987.
12 This recalls – yet contrasts with – the kind of ritual violence examined in Maurice Bloch, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
13 *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 91 (DZZ 5:172).
14 *Eihei Kōroku*, vol. 1 record 12 (DZZ 3:10).
15 *Jingde chuandeng lu* (Jpn. *Keitoku dentōroku*) vol. 5, T. vol. 51, no. 2076.
16 *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, 83, and Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Kokyō" (DZZ1:237–239).
17 See Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991, pp. 113–114; and Hee-Jin Kim, "The Reason of Words and Letters: Dōgen and *Kōan* Language," in William R. LaFleur, ed., *Dōgen Studies*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985, pp. 54–82.
18 Daitō was especially known for his use of capping phrases; see Kraft.
19 *Wumenkuan* (hereafter WMK, Jpn. *Mumonkan*), T. vol. 48, no. 2005, cases 30 and 33.
20 *Eihei Kōroku* (DZZ), 10.63c.
21 DZZ, 5:158–160.
22 DZZ, 1:449–456.
23 *Eihei Kōroku*, vol. 9, case 71 (DZZ 4:230).
24 *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, case 183 (DZZ 5:218).
25 *Zongmen tongyao zhi*, vol. 8.
26 *Zongmen liandeng huiyao*, in the supplemental collection, *Xu zangjing* (vol. 136), vol. 3.
27 *Jingde chuandeng lu*, vol. 9, T. vol. 51, no. 2076:265c.
28 *Zongmen tongyao ji*, vol. 4.
29 *Zongmen lian-deng hui-yao*, vol. 7.
30 *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, case 61 (DZZ 5:158).
31 Kana *Shōbōgenzō*, "Jinzū" fascicle (DZZ 1:392–402).
32 WMK 25, and *Zongrong lu* (Jpn. *Shōyōroku*) 90, T. vol. 48, no. 2004.
33 This *kōan* is cited in the prose commentary section of *Biyan lu* case 4 (T. vol. 48, no. 2003:143b–144c), and is discussed as the main topic of the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Shinfukatoku" fascicle (DZZ 1:82–86), on the "Ungraspable Mind."
34 DZZ 1:302–315.
35 *Eihei Kōroku*, vol. 9, case 81 (DZZ 4:238).
36 This *kōan* is cited in *Mana Shōbōgenzō*, case 15 (DZZ 5:132), and is included with extensive commentary in the Kana *Shōbōgenzō*, "Ikkya myōjū" fascicle (DZZ 1:76–81).
37 *Eihei Kōroku*, 9.71.
38 This *kōan*, originally contained in several of the transmission of the lamp records including *Jingde chuandeng lu* vol. 8 (T. no. 51:257c), is cited in *Eihei Kōroku* vol. 9 case 63 (DZZ 4:224). This case appears in the record of master Hongzhi (T. no. 48:34b), the original compiler of the cases that appear in the *Congrong lu* collection. It is also included in *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 19 (DZZ 5:134), and is discussed extensively in Dōgen's Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Gyōji," part I (DZZ 1:145–170).
39 WMK, case 23.
40 This *kōan*, which originally appeared in *Jingde chuandeng lu* vol. 11 (T. no. 51:289a), is cited in the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Raihaitokuzui" fascicle (DZZ

1:302–315), and it is also included in abbreviated fashion in Dōgen's *Eihei Kōroku* vol. 9 case 32 (DZZ 4:202).

41 Miriam Levering, "Dōgen's *Raihaitokuzui* and Women Teaching in Sung Chan," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 21/1 (1998), 77–110.

42 *Biyan lu*, 26 (T. vol. 48:166c–167b).

43 *Eihei Kōroku*, 2.148 (from 1245).

44 Ibid., 5.378.

45 Ibid., 6.443 (from 1251).

46 This *kōan*, which originally appeared in Jingde chuandeng lu vol. 5 (T. no. 51:244a), is cited in Dōgen's *Eihei Kōroku* vol. 9 case 27 (DZZ 4:198–200) and it is also the main subject of the Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Tajinzū" fascicle (DZZ 2:41–252).

47 This *kōan*, originally contained in Jingde chuandeng lu vol. 11 (T. no. 51:283b) and other transmission of the lamp records, is cited from *Biyan lu* case 92 (T. no. 48:216b–216c). It is also included in *Congrong lu* case 1 (T. no. 48:227c–228b), *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 141 (DZZ 5:200), and the *kōan* collection of master Dahui. In addition, this case is discussed extensively in Dōgen's Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Osaku sendaba" fascicle (DZZ 2:253–258).

48 This *kōan*, which appears in transmission of the lamp records on Zhaozhou's teachings, is cited in *Mana Shōbōgenzō* case 74 (DZZ 5:164) and it is also discussed briefly in Dahui yulu vol. 9 and more extensively in Dōgen's Kana *Shōbōgenzō* "Kankin" (DZZ 2:320–342).

12

"RELY ON THE MEANING, NOT ON THE WORDS"

Shinran's methodology and strategy for reading scriptures and writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

Eisho Nasu

> When Śākyamuni was about to enter *nirvāṇa*, he said to the *bhikṣus*, "From this day on, rely on dharma, not on people who teach it. Rely on the meaning, not on the words. Rely on wisdom, not on the working of the mind. Rely on the sūtras that fully express the meaning, not on those that do not."[1]

Introduction

The *Kyōgyōshinshō*[2] is the most significant work by Shinran (1173–1262), the founder of the Jōdo Shin-shū, upon which the doctrinal foundation of the school has been established. The text of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* has been studied almost exclusively by Jōdo Shin-shū scholars whose primary focus is on doctrinal issues within their own tradition, with little concern for historical context. This focus has produced a rather rarefied view of Shinran. It is understandable that a religion should seek to extract the founder's ideas and teachings from their own particular historical context – religious teachings, if they are to survive, after all, must have some sort of universal currency. But when these same scholars then look back to describe the founder, they are then liable to attribute to him an originality or uniqueness that seems to place him outside of his own time. Such is the case with Shinran. He is described by the tradition as an "original" thinker,[3] and, according to one even more extreme critique, his readings of Buddhist scriptures in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* are "completely arbitrary and audacious in the extreme."[4]

As a result of recent developments in studies of the medieval Japanese Tendai school,[5] however, we are beginning to uncover that Shinran's

readings of the texts are perhaps "audacious," but neither "arbitrary" nor "unique." Shinran, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, systematically applied the *kanjin* (mind-contemplation) style of scriptural reading popularly practiced among medieval Japanese Tendai scholastics.[6] Historical evidence suggests that Shinran was schooled in *kanjin*-style reading, particularly that of the Eshin school (Jpn. Eshinryū), while he was a monk on Mt. Hiei. It is also noteworthy that the Eshin lineage was transmitted to the Kantō (Eastern Regions) during the mid-thirteenth century, [7] which coincided with the period when Shinran was completing an early draft of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. By applying the *kanjin* style in his readings of scriptures in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran kindled the spirituality of the other power (Jpn. *tariki*) *nenbutsu* at a time when the Pure Land teaching of Hōnen (1133–1212) was under tight scrutiny by the medieval religio-political powers.

Despite the fact that there is ample evidence demonstrating the influence of medieval Tendai doctrine on the development of Shinran's thought,[8] the significance of this fact has yet to be examined in detail. This chapter is one such attempt to reposition Shinran's thought in a broader doctrinal and historical context. It focuses on how Shinran employed the *kanjin*-style method of reading texts to construct his *Kyōgyōshinshō*. First, I situate Shinran in his position as a disciple of Hōnen, in order to examine the historical context that led him to compile the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. I look particularly at the evidence for his interactions with, or knowledge of, Hōnen's other followers who were also composing texts at that time. Second, I examine Shinran's adoption of the Eshin school's *kanjin*-style reading for the composition of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, re-evaluating the significance of Shinran's background as a Tendai monk who witnessed the rise of the popularity of the Tendai studies, especially in the Kantō region. Third, I revisit the significance of Shinran's unique understanding of the other power *nenbutsu* in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* by focusing on his *kanjin*-style re-reading as applied to the concept of the directing of virtue (Jpn. *ekō*). Although Shinran's understanding of Pure Land thought, as Shin scholars maintain, might spiritually transcend history, the significance of his act of writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō* must also be appreciated in the concrete historical context in which the text was written.

Shinran's writing of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*: historical contexts

In order to understand the purpose of Shinran's writing of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, it is often suggested by Shin scholars that "gratitude" was the primary "motive force" for his writing of the text, as clearly demonstrated in the postscript of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.[9] In the conclusion of his postscript, Shinran expresses his joy in compiling the text:

> How joyous I am, my heart and mind being rooted in the Buddha-ground of the universal Vow, and my thoughts and feelings flowing within the dharma-ocean, which is beyond comprehension! I am deeply aware of the Tathagata's immense compassion, and I sincerely revere the benevolent care behind the masters' teaching activity. My joy grows even fuller, my gratitude and indebtedness ever more compelling. Therefore, I have selected [passages expressing] the core of the Pure Land way and gathered here its essentials. Mindful solely of the profundity of the Buddha's benevolence, I pay no heed to the derision of others.[10]

Shinran's motivation in writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, however, cannot be simply attributed to his gratitude for the compassion of Amida Buddha. Before this humble but passionate statement, he also makes very specific references to a few historical incidents that are political rather than spiritual. He begins the postscript with a brief account of the government persecution in 1207 waged against Hōnen and his major disciples, in which they were punished with a sentence of five years of exile from Kyoto. This is followed by a brief note on Hōnen's death in Kyoto a few months after his pardon in 1211.[11] In the next section of the postscript, Shinran then records in detail how he received a transmission of the *Senchakushū* directly from Hōnen in 1205, followed by his praise of the book with a note that the text was compiled at the request of the Chancellor Kujō Kanezane (1149–1207).[12] What is the significance that such notes are included in the postscript of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*?

Shinran's postscript clearly reflects the historical situation Hōnen's disciples encountered after the death of their master. Trouble began almost immediately after they published the *Senchakushū* in 1212, within a year of Hōnen's death. The publication of the *Senchakushū* almost immediately encountered criticism by the eminent scholar-monk Myōe Kōben (1173–1232) of the Kegon school, who wrote the *Saijarin* (The Wheel of Obliterating the Heresy) in 1213.[13] Major disciples of Hōnen, such as Ryūkan, Seikaku, Kōsai and Shōku, were quick to respond to Myōe's critique in the *Saijarin* by writing numerous texts to defend the master's work.[14] Myōe's criticism of Hōnen, although raising a very serious doctrinal challenge, did not seem to have any potency in silencing Hōnen's disciples. After Hōnen was pardoned, his disciples quickly became active again in propagating the Pure Land teaching in Kyoto. During this period, Shinran was living in Hitachi province in the Kantō and is thought to have been preparing for writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

Hōnen's disciples, who were actively engaged in the propagation of their master's teaching, were, however, hit hard again in 1227 (Karoku 3) by another persecution waged against them.[15] This persecution originated with a Tendai scholar in the Kantō named Jōshō who in 1225 wrote a text titled

Dan Senchaku (Denouncing the Selection [of *Nenbutsu*]) criticizing the *Senchakushū*. Ryūkan, who read Jōshō's work, which had been brought into Kyoto in the same year, responded to the critique by writing *Ken Senchaku* (Revealing the Selection [of *Nenbutsu*]) in 1227. According to a historical record, one of Ryūkan's followers, named Okamoto Gyōren, distributed the *Ken Senchaku* in the Kantō, and the tract received strong support there.[16] In order to suppress the rising popularity of Ryūkan's work, Jōshō sent his *Dan Senchaku* and Ryūkan's *Ken Senchaku* to the administrators of Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei to settle this doctrinal dispute. Unsurprisingly, Jōshō's position was upheld, and the Enryakuji's administrators issued a request to the imperial court and Bakufu to suppress the activities of Hōnen's disciples in both Kyoto and Kamakura.[17]

The resulting suppression was particularly damaging to Hōnen's disciples, who were allowed to remain in Kyoto only under the supervision of the administrators of the Tendai school. The court ordered that Ryūkan, Kōsai, and Kūamidabutsu (1155–1228) be exiled from Kyoto. Disregarding the restraining order from the imperial court, Tendai priests raided the residences of Hōnen's followers and vandalized Hōnen's grave. Upon the request of the administrators of Enryakuji, the imperial court confiscated the printing blocks of the *Senchakushū* and turned them over to Enryakuji to be burned. Although Ryūkan escaped arrest by fleeing from Kyoto quickly, he died in 1227 in Sagami province under the protection of his follower Mōri Suemitsu.[18]

The disciples of Hōnen, however, did not stop propagating the Pure Land teaching through their writings. Soon after the persecution in 1227, Hōnen's disciples who escaped the persecution, such as Benchō in Kyūshū, and Shōku, Genchi, and Chōsai in Kyoto, remained active throughout this period.[19] In 1239, the *Senchakushū* was published again and distributed among Hōnen's followers. All this historical evidence suggests that, though Hōnen's disciples encountered severe persecutions, they were very active in publicly defending the criticism waged against the *Senchakushū*. Despite the Tendai school's attempt to suppress the distribution of the *Senchakushū*, the text continued to circulate among Hōnen's followers.[20]

For a historical placement of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* it is significant that the period during which Shinran was compiling the *Kyōgyōshinshō* clearly overlaps with the literary activities of Hōnen's disciples, especially after the 1227 persecution. A prototype of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is considered to have been completed some time after Shinran returned to Kyoto in his sixties (around 1232) and at latest before he allowed his follower Sonren to copy the manuscript in 1247.[21] Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that Shinran was well aware of the activities of Hōnen's other disciples in both the Kantō and Kyoto while he was compiling the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.

It is in this light that we can understand the final remarks in the postscript. Shinran is alluding to the very sensitive political situation of the

surviving disciples of Hōnen who dared to defend their master's teaching after the persecution in 1227:

> May those who see and hear this work be brought – either through the cause of reverently embracing the teaching or through the condition of [other's] doubt and slander of it – to manifest *shinjin* within the power of the Vow and reveal the incomparable fruit of enlightenment in the land of peace.[22]

Shinran's final statement in the postscript is, however, not completely original to him. Shinran borrows a passage found in the final section of Seikaku's *Yuishinshō*.[23] A very ironic historical reality behind this passage is that Seikaku, who was one of the most revered disciples of Hōnen, was in fact one of the Tendai administrators who requested the imperial court to suppress the activities of Hōnen's disciples led by Ryūkan in 1227.[24] After Hōnen died, Seikaku, as the leader of the Agui lineage of Tendai preaching, returned to Enryakuji to pursue a career as a scholar administrator. He was serving as a *tandai* (a judge of Tendai doctrine) when Jōshō submitted his complaint about Ryūkan's work. Seikaku was even invited to visit Kamakura just before the persecution in 1227 took place.[25] Therefore, there is little doubt that Seikaku was aware of the activities of Hōnen's disciples in both Kyoto and the Kantō before the persecution.

In the Kantō, Shinran must have witnessed the development of tensions between Jōshō and Ryūkan's supporters, which eventually dragged in Seikaku, and resulted in the untimely death of Ryūkan, who fled to Sagami province in the Kantō. Shinran's final remark in the postscript, hoping that "either through the cause of reverently embracing the teaching or through the condition of [other's] doubt and slander of it" others might be brought to attain "enlightenment in the land of peace," was not a rhetorical embellishment but a reflection on a historical reality.[26] In this social and political context, Shinran wrote the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in order to clarify and transmit Hōnen's teaching expounded in the *Senchakushū*.

The Tendai Eshin school's influence on the writing of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*

As demonstrated in the postscript discussed in the previous section, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* reflects the very concrete historical situation faced by a disciple of Hōnen after the 1227 Tendai persecution. This historical context is likewise reflected in Shinran's style of writing. His choice of the *kanjin*-style textual analysis, developed in the medieval period by the Eshin scholars, is yet another sign that Shinran was a man of his time.

The *Kyōgyōshinshō* consists mainly of passages cited from more than sixty different sūtras and commentaries.[27] But Shinran's free and creative

method of explicating the texts often goes beyond the original meaning of the passages. These facts tend to cause some consternation among Shin scholars:

> The greater part of Shinran's "collection of passages" is made up of quotations from the sūtras and the treatises and commentaries of the masters, and there is little of his own comment. It is certainly striking that an original thinker of Shinran's stature should, in the single systematic presentation of his thought – unquestionably his lifework – bury his own words with quotations from the works of others. Moreover, these quotations are not always cited faithfully; . . . [a] number of them are greatly altered in meaning. We must consider his intent in choosing to present his thought in this way.[28]

Although Shin scholars praise Shinran for compiling a text defending his master Hōnen and thereby "express[ing] in detail a highly original and dynamic vision of the Pure Land way,"[29] they are also a little uneasy about the method he employed to explain his interpretation of the Pure Land teaching:

> Chief among his [Shinran's] methods is his controversial use of the Japanese practice of punctuating and annotating Chinese texts in order to recast them into Japanese sentence structure and grammatical form and to interpret the Chinese characters. He added such reading notes to all the passages in his collection, but at a number of points he chose to depart from the accepted readings and to impose new interpretations, some clearly at variance with the literal meanings of the texts.[30]

Recent studies on medieval Japanese Buddhist hermeneutics, however, show that the methodology of reading Shinran applied in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* was not as controversial as modern Shin scholars seem to think.[31] Shinran simply adopted an exegetical method very commonly employed within the Japanese Tendai school. This is the *kanjin* style of reading, best known for its liberal parsing of the scriptures through skillful application of *kunten* (Japanese-reading notations) to a Chinese text in order to reinterpret the text without altering the order of the characters. Jacqueline Stone, in her recent work on medieval Tendai studies, describes the methodology of *kanjin*-style reading:

> *Kanjin*-style readings frequently employ elaborate forms of word play. One common device is the creative "breakdown" (Jpn. *yomikudashi*) of a text written in literary Chinese text to produce a Japanese reading unrelated to, or even at odds with, the sense of the Chinese original. Syntactical markers and phonetic syllables

> indicating grammatical inflections were also added to a Chinese text so that it could be read in Japanese word order. Most Chinese characters are not in themselves nouns, verbs, or modifiers but function as such according to their syntactical placement; thus the creative use of such indicators can rearrange, even subvert, the Chinese text to produce a Japanese reading radically different in meaning from the original yet still technically "faithful" to it in the sense that every character is preserved and accounted for. Thus the text is made in effect to testify against itself; its authority as a classic document is appropriated to legitimate an interpretation quite different from what it actually says.[32]

Let us look at some specific examples of Shinran's use of the *kanjin* method. (See the appendix for English translations of Shinran's text, followed by the *kanbun* texts and his *yomikudashi* (breakdown reading) based on the notation. The *kanbun* and *yomikudashi* texts are also added to the English translation of the standard reading to demonstrate the differences of the readings.) The following passage from Confucius' *Analects*, which Shinran placed as the last citation before the postscript, is typical of how Shinran alters the meaning of the original passage by applying his own reading notes. Shinran's reading of the text is as follows:

> 1 The *Analects* states: Chi-lu asked, "Should one worship spirits?" Confucius said, "One should not worship spirits. Why should people worship spirits?"[33]

Now compare the standard reading of this passage:

> 2 Chi Lu asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served. The Master said, "You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?"[34]

In the context of the *Analects*, Confucius critically responds to Chi Lu's concern about the spirits of the dead and the gods. Considering the popularity of the *Analects* in Japanese culture, there is no doubt that Shinran knew the original intent of the passage. Indeed, the point here is that anyone seeing it would know the original meaning – that is, an important premise of the *kanjin* method is that both writer and audience are aware of the facts of interpretation. The writer demonstrates his mastery of both classic texts and the latest doctrinal trends through his new interpretation. Thus, in the above example, Shinran alters the reading without changing the word order of the passage to extract a meaning that confirms his own opinion that "Buddhists should not worship non-Buddhist deities."[35] Shinran's reading might not have pleased the Confucian scholars serving in the imperial court,

but in the context of medieval Tendai studies, this kind of doctrinal manipulation was perfectly understandable and acceptable among medieval Tendai scholars.

The following is another straightforward example of how Shinran applies the *kanjin* style of reading in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Here, Shinran reformulates the simple noun phrases found in Shandao's *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra* into sentences to demonstrate that meditative (Jpn. *jō*) and non-meditative (Jpn. *san*) practices are skillful means to guide practitioners to entrust Amida's Primal Vow and sole practice of *nenbustu*. The doctrinal position genuinely reflects the Pure Land teaching advocated by Hōnen. However, the methodology of reading that Shinran employs is clearly that of the medieval Tendai.

Shinran's reading:

> 3 Further, he [Shandao] states: Meditative good is a means to lead one to discernment [of the Primal Vow].
>
> Further, he [Shandao] states: Non-meditative good is a means to lead one to the practice [of the *nenbutsu*].[36]

The source text:

> 4 Passages on meditative good introducing the contemplation [on Amida and the Pure Land].
>
> Passages on non-meditative good introducing the practice [of good in everyday life].

Although Shinran spiritually converted to the Pure Land teaching of Hōnen in 1201, he seems to have remained faithful to the methodology of Tendai studies which he learned as a monk on Mt. Hiei. Modern historians generally agree that, before he became a disciple of Hōnen, he was a priest at Jōgyōzanmai-dō in Yokawa.[37] Some also suggest that he had close ties with Mudōji at Tōdō.[38] While it is not clear exactly what lineage Shinran was affiliated with when he was practicing on Mt. Hiei, it is clear that both the Yokawa and Mudōji areas were strongholds of the Eshin school lineage of Tendai studies during the Kamakura period.[39]

There is also circumstantial evidence that Shinran's association with the Eshin school scholars probably continued while he was compiling the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in Kantō and then in Kyoto. According to research on medieval Japanese Tendai studies, the early to mid-thirteenth century is the period when the Tendai school, particularly the Eshin school lineage, began to establish its institutional foundation in all provinces in the Kantō. By the late thirteenth century, "growing Tendai presence in the east eventually gave

rise, within that tradition, to distinction between the Tendai of the capital (Jpn. *miyako Tendai*) and eastern or provincial Tendai (Jpn. *Kantō Tendai*, or *inaka Tendai*)."[40]

Although it was after Shinran's time that the Kantō Tendai established an extensive network of seminaries called *dangisho* (centers for doctrinal studies) in all the Kantō provinces, there is ample historical evidence that Tendai priests were very active in the Kantō from the early thirteenth century, when Shinran was living in Hitachi province.[41] Even after Shinran left the Kantō, financial support for his living in Kyoto was brought from the Kantō regions by his followers.[42] Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that Shinran remained well informed about developments in Tendai studies there, particularly those of the Eshin school, through his followers' continuous visits and letters.[43]

The effectiveness of the *kanjin*-style readings in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is demonstrated by the fact that Ryūkan's *Ken Senchaku* received strong support from the Kantō followers, while Jōshō's *Dan Senchaku* was rejected. Although today neither text is extant, the differences of these two scholars' doctrinal lineages within the Tendai school are well known. Jōshō was a disciple of Hōchibō-Shōshin, who was a "scrupulous exegete" and a critic of the *kanjin*-style interpretive mode.[44]

The Japanese historian Taira Masayuki, in examining the 1227 persecution of Hōnen's disciples, concludes that those who arranged to bring Jōshō's complaint to the Tendai administration were also disciples of Shōshin. Among them Shūgen, who succeeded Shōshin's lineage, was a die-hard critic of Hōnen.[45] On the other hand, Ryūkan is known to have been a successful Tendai scholar who studied with two Eshin school scholars, Kōen and Hangen, before becoming a disciple of Hōnen.[46] Ryūkan was clearly an advocate of the *kanjin*-style interpretation of texts, as demonstrated in his *Gusanshingi*:

> 5 Rely on the words, not on the meaning. That is what ignorant people love to follow. What a shame![47]

In 1227, Jōshō was able to suppress Ryūkan's advocacy of Hōnen's teaching by appealing to the ecclesiastical authorities on Mt. Hiei. However, in a broader historical context, he was fighting a losing battle over the *kanjin* style of interpretation developed within medieval Tendai studies. The *kanjin* hermeneutics, based on "personal insight" (Jpn. *kanjin*) – extracting the meaning – rather than "fidelity to texts" (Jpn. *kyōsō*) – adherence to words – prevailed in both Kyoto and the Kantō during the Kamakura period, despite efforts to preserve traditional Tendai scholasticism by Shōshin and his disciples.[48] Considering this historical context of Shinran's background as a Tendai monk, his adoption of *kanjin*-style exegesis in the *Kyōgyōshinshō* was very natural and reasonable.

The uniqueness of Shinran's thought revisited

Shin scholars often laud as one of Shinran's most significant accomplishments his courageous effort to maintain the momentum of Hōnen's teaching of other power – even after numerous persecutions against the advocacy of the "sole" practice of *nenbutsu* (Jpn. *senju nenbutsu*) – by writing the *Kyōgyōshinshō*.[49] It is noteworthy that prior to the 1227 persecution, Hōnen's disciples such as Ryūkan, Seikaku, Kōsai and Shōkū all strongly emphasized in their writings the aspect of the Pure Land teaching as "single" or "sole" *nenbutsu* practice of recitation of the name through Amida Buddha's other power, as Hōnen demonstrated in the *Senchakushū*. After the persecution, however, Hōnen's position of single and sole practice of recitation of Amida's name through other power almost disappears from the writings of Hōnen's disciples such as Benchō, Genchi or Chōsai – undoubtedly to avoid unnecessary confrontations with the Tendai authorities on Mt. Hiei.[50]

Contrary to this general tendency among Hōnen's disciples, however, Shinran, in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, further elaborated Hōnen's understanding of the Pure Land practice in the *Senchakushū*, boldly stating that one should cast aside the sundry self-power practices of the path of sages and practice solely the single practice of *nenbutsu* through other-power. Shinran's doctrinal position emphasizing other power corresponds to the same general attitude of disciples immediately after Hōnen's death, particularly that of Ryūkan.[51]

In order to express his "personal insight" on the other power of Amida Buddha, Shinran systematically applied the *kanjin* method to the texts he cited in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*. Following are three such examples found in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, in which Shinran rereads the passages to express his understanding that in the Pure Land teaching the subject of the directing of virtue (Jpn. *ekō*) does not originate in the *nenbutsu* practitioner but is directed from Amida Buddha, which is other-power (Jpn. *tariki*).

The first example is from Shinran's "Chapter on *Shinjin*," citing a passage of the *Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*, which Shinran identifies as the passage of the fulfillment of the eighteenth vow.[52] The following is a comparison of Shinran's reading and the standard reading.[53]

Shinran's reading:

> 6 The passage declaring the fulfillment of the Primal Vow in the [*Larger*] Sūtra states:
>
> All sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of *shinjin* and joy. <u>[Amida Buddha] shall direct [his] sincere mind to them (Jpn. *shishin ni ekō seshimetamaeri*)</u>. If they aspire to be born in that land, they then immediately attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma.[54]

Standard reading:

> 7 If all sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of *shinjin* and joy, sincerely direct their merits to [others], and aspire to be born in that land, they then shall immediately attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression.[55]

In this citation, Shinran takes the four characters in the middle of the sentence, *shishin ekō*, out of the flow of the passage and adds the honorific verb *seshimetamaeri* so that the reader cannot identify the subject as the *nenbutsu* practitioner. The word *seshimetamaeri* is the highest honorific form of the verb *su*, implying that the subject of the directing of virtue (Jpn. *ekō*) is the most venerable "person" in the text, who, in this context, is Amida Buddha.[56]

The next example, from the *Kyōgyōshinshō*'s "Chapter on Practice," is a citation from Tanluan's *Commentary on the Treatise on the Pure Land.*

Shinran's reading:

> 8 How is directing of virtue accomplished? It is by [Amida Buddha, who] never abandons any sentient being in suffering, but constantly aspires for [the salvation of the suffering beings] in [his] heart, and <u>venerably fulfills (Jpn. *etamaeru*)</u> the mind of great compassion by taking the directing of virtue as foremost.
>
> The directing of virtue has two aspects: that for going forth to the Pure Land and that for returning to this world. "Directing for going forth" means that [Amida Buddha] gives [his] own virtues to all sentient beings and <u>has vowed (Jpn. *sagan shite*) [as Dharmākara Bodhisattva] to bring them all to birth (Jpn. *ōjō seshimetamau*)</u> in Amida Tathāgata's Pure Land of Happiness.[57]

Standard reading:

> 9 [Bodhisattvas] never abandon sentient beings in suffering, constantly aspire [for their awakening] in their hearts, and take the directing of virtue as foremost. That is because they wish to accomplish their mind of great compassion.
>
> "Directing for going forth" means that [bodhisattvas] shall give their own virtues to all sentient beings and aspire to be born together with them in Amida Tathāgata's Pure Land of Happiness.[58]

In the context of Tanluan's *Commentary*, the subject of the directing of virtue (Jpn. *ekō*) is all bodhisattva practitioners who aspire to be born in

Amida Buddha’s Pure Land. Shinran, however, changes the subject of the directing of virtue (Jpn. *ekō*) to Amida Buddha by adding honorific endings to two verbs, *etamaeru* and *ōjō seshimetamaeru*. In the second half of the citation as well, he modifies the sentence structure to produce the meaning that Amida Buddha, when he was Dharmākara Bodhisattva, vowed to bring all sentient beings to the Pure Land. In the standard reading, the word *sagan* (aspire, or vow) is modifying the following clause. Shinran, however, changes the punctuation to make an independent clause with the word.

The third example, from the “Chapter on *Shinjin*,” is a citation of Shandao’s *Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra*.

Shinran’s reading:

> 10 The third is the mind of aspiration for birth and directing of virtue. . . . Again, let <u>those who are to be born (Jpn. *shōzuru mono*)</u> [in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land] with the mind of aspiration and directing of virtue to aspire [for attainment of birth] by unfailingly and <u>decidedly (Jpn. *ketsujō shite*) taking (Jpn. *mochiite*) the Vow (Jpn. *gan*)</u> which [Amida Buddha] <u>has directed (Jpn. *ekō shitamaeru*) to them with [his] true and real mind</u>.[59]

Standard reading:

> 11 Again, those who wish to be born [in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land] by directing their virtue with the mind of aspiration [for attainment of birth] must unfailingly aspire to be born [in the Pure Land] by directing [their virtue] and aspiring [to be born] with the true and real determined mind.

In this example, Shinran not only adds an honorific to the verb *ekō*, but also substantially modifies the sentence structure by altering the parts of speech in the sentence so that readers will identify the subject of the directing of virtue (Jpn. *ekō*) as Amida Buddha, not the practitioner aspiring for birth in the Pure Land.[60]

As shown in these three examples, throughout the *Kyōgyōshinshō* Shinran consistently and systematically adds honorifics and modifies the sentence structure of passages discussing the concept of the directing of virtue to express his insight regarding Amida Buddha’s other power. As for the practitioners’ recitation of *nenbutsu*, in the “Chapter on Practice,” Shinran says:

> Clearly we know, then, that the *nenbutsu* is not a self-power practice performed by foolish beings or sages; it is therefore called the practice of “not-directing virtue [on the part of beings]” [Jpn. *fuekō no gyō*]. Masters of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna and people

> burdened with karmic evil, whether heavy or light, should all in the same way take refuge in the great treasure ocean of the selected Vow and attain Buddhahood through the *nenbutsu*.[61]

Shinran's comment comes immediately after his citation of a passage of Hōnen's *Senchakushū* in which Hōnen explains why he recommends practitioners to choose the recitation of *nenbutsu* over other Buddhist practices, for which Hōnen drew heavy criticism from the scholars of the other Buddhist schools.[62] In this passage, Shinran defends Hōnen's doctrinal position by pointing out that, in fact, the selection of the *nenbutsu* practice over other practices was not made by Hōnen but was selected in Amida Buddha's primal vow. Nor is the recitation of the *nenbutsu* selected because it strengthens the practitioners' power of the directing virtue, as other Buddhist practices often claim. Therefore, the *nenbutsu* is the practice of "not-directing virtue" (Jpn. *fuekō no gyō*) from the perspective of the practitioner.

By applying a *kanjin*-style reading to the cited passages in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran skillfully defends Hōnen's advocacy of the sole practice of *nenbutsu* (Jpn. *senju nenbutsu*). By reconfiguring the scriptural passages, Shinran transforms the concept of directing virtue from an action originating in practitioners to one originating from Amida Buddha himself. He accomplishes his purpose without compromising Hōnen's doctrinal position by appealing to the highest authority, that of Amida Buddha, who undoubtedly supersedes the authority of scholars and administrators on Mt. Hiei.

Conclusion

Although Shinran's spiritual insights may be ahistorical, the *Kyōgyōshinshō* clearly is genuinely a product of medieval Japanese Buddhist thought. More importantly, Shinran's skillful use of the Tendai exegetical method reflects his strategy for defending *nenbutsu* communities developing in the Kantō, especially after the tragic death of a leading disciple of Hōnen, Ryūkan, as a result of the persecution of the *nenbutsu* practice in 1227 instigated by the Tendai school. Shinran compiled the *Kyōgyōshinshō* to defend the *Senchakushū* by applying the same methodology his opponents used and by appealing to the higher spiritual authority of Amida Buddha himself. Shinran's strategic adoption of *kanjin*-style reading perhaps aided his followers in the Kantō regions in defending their sole-practice *nenbutsu* against the rising presence of the medieval Tendai institution in virtually all Kantō provinces.

It is noteworthy that Shinran inherited Ryūkan's critical eye toward Tendai scholars who "rely on the words, not on the meaning." In the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, Shinran clarifies his position against these scholars' blind adherence to the

literal reading of texts by drawing on the *Dazhidu lun*, citing a passage in which Śākyamuni Buddha instructs his disciples to "rely on the meaning, not on the words," when he was about to enter nirvāṇa. Śākyamuni explains:

> With regard to relying on the meaning, meaning itself is beyond debate of such matters as, like against dislike, evil against virtue, falsity against truth. Hence, words may indeed have meaning, but the meaning is not the words. Consider, for example, a person instructing us by pointing to the moon with his finger. [To take words to be the meaning] is like looking at the finger and not at the moon. The person would say, "I am pointing to the moon with my finger in order to show it to you. Why do you look at my finger and not the moon?" Similarly, words are the finger pointing to the meaning; they are not the meaning itself. Hence, do not rely upon words.[63]

Words can direct the reader to an insight, just like the finger pointing to the moon. However, words cannot reach the insight itself, as the finger cannot reach the moon. The act of reading by simply following the meaning of words is, as Shinran points out, just like staring at the finger without even bothering to look for the moon. Shinran is, of course, careful enough to cite this passage without altering its reading.

Shinran's strategy for compiling the *Kyōgyōshinshō* based on the insight of "relying on the meaning, not on the words," however, has yet to be understood properly by polemically charged modern scholars who are either too critical or too apologetic. Critical readers typically fault Shinran's method of reading scriptures in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, saying, "if scripture is cited as proof, it is necessary to quote with sufficient care so as not to distort the meaning of the original."[64] Meanwhile, apologetic readers defend Shinran's reading:

> He did not alter the texts ignoring the original meaning as some have charged; quite to the contrary, he read the source meaning of the scriptures more deeply and clearly than the original authors, and in order to bring it out, he changed the traditional readings where he felt that they were inadequate.[65]

The reality, perhaps, falls somewhere between these positions. In order to express clearly his "personal insight" conceived through reading the scriptures, Shinran selectively and systematically altered the readings of the cited texts. His re-reading of texts, however, was a doctrinally acceptable method in the context of medieval Japanese Tendai studies. In this light, it is telling to note that in his own day Shinran may have been criticized for his ideas, but not for his methodology. His use of the *kanjin*-style reading was not

simply a "leftover" from his days as a Tendai monk but was a historically necessary strategy to counter the criticisms against Hōnen's *Senchakushū* raised by Tendai scholars. Shinran must have been well aware that he too might receive harsh criticism from the traditional Tendai scholastics, as Ryūkan had. He must also have felt the trend of the time, that those who advocated traditional exegesis of strict adherence to words of the scriptures were rather in the minority and could not keep pace with the rapidly growing spiritual needs developing among medieval Japanese Buddhists.

Notes

1 *Dazhidu lun* (Jpn. *Daichidoron*, Commentary on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra) cited in *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way* (*Kyōgyōshinshō*), in *The Collected Works of Shinran* (hereafter *CWS*), 2 vols, Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997, 1:241.

2 The full title of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is *Ken Jōdo shinjitsu kyō gyō shō monrui* (A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way). During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the text was called as the *Kyōgyōshō* or the *Kyōgyōshinshō monrui*. The *Kyōgyōshinshō* is an abridged title of the text that became popular around the time of the eighth abbot of Hongwanji, Rennyo (1415–1499). See Shigemi Kazuyuki, *Kyōgyōshinshō no kenkyū*, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981, pp. 32–33.

3 The editors of the *Collected Works of Shinran*, in their introduction to the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, however, acknowledge the problem regarding the originality of the text as follows: "The greater part of Shinran's 'collection of passages' is made up of quotations from the sūtras and the treatises and commentaries of the masters, and there is little of his own comment. It is certainly striking that an original thinker of Shinran's stature should, in the single systematic presentation of his thought – unquestionably his lifework – bury his own words with quotations from the works of others. Moreover, these quotations are not always cited faithfully . . . a number of them are greatly altered in meaning" (*CWS*, 2:23).

4 The critique goes on to focus on Shinran's methodology of reading texts, saying that "It is difficult to recognize them as quotations; they are basically nothing more than original passages. In order to set forth his own views, he borrowed passages from the sūtras, treatises, and commentaries that suited his own purposes." Mochizuki Shinkō, *Ryakujutsu Jōdo kyōrishi*, Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1977, p. 431. The passages are translated and cited in the *CWS*, 2:23–24.

5 A historical review and the scholarly updates of the Japanese scholarship on medieval Tendai studies and other related topics are available in Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999, pp. 3–95.

6 Jacqueline Stone, in her recent study on medieval Japanese Tendai, summarizes the principle of *kanjin*-style reading as follows: "The *kanjin*-style interpretive mode found in many medieval *kuden* [oral transmission] texts aims at retrieving hidden meanings held to embody the most profound insights of religious liberation. Such hidden meanings, it was thought, could be accessed only by those with enlightened insight and transmitted only to the properly initiated; they were not part of common doctrinal understanding. This mode of interpretation has been characterized by modern scholars as undermining orthodox doctrinal understanding by encouraging the proliferation of arbitrary, private readings. . . . In large

measure, this dismissal may be traced to a profound epistemological gap that separates the way scholars read texts today from the way they were read by scholar-monks of medieval period" (Stone, p. 156). For the detailed discussion on the *kanjin*-style interpretive mode, see Stone, pp. 165–167.

7 For the transmission of the Eshin school lineage to Kantō, see Stone, pp. 148–150 and 306–314.

8 Tendai's influence on Shinran's thought has been suggested by several scholars, such as Shimaji Daitō, *Nihon Bukkyō kyōgakushi*, 1933, reprinted Tokyo: Nakayama Shobō, 1976, p. 464; Hazama Jikō, *Nihon Bukkyō no tenkai to sono kichō (jō): Nihon Tendai to Kamakura Bukkyō*, 1948, reprinted Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1968; Fugen Kōju, *Nihon Jōdokyō shisōshi kenkyū*, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1972, pp. 535–549; Uryūzu Ryūo, "Shinshū kyōgaku no shūso katen no ichi benken," in Uryūzu Ryūo, *Zoku Shinshū tenseki no kenkyū*, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1992, pp. 302–316.

9 See, for example, the introduction to the *Kyōgyōshinshō* in *CWS*, 2:15.

10 *CWS*, 1:291.

11 *CWS*, 1:289–290.

12 *CWS*, 1:291. Shinran's mention of Kujō Kanezane in the postscript as the person who requested that Hōnen compile the text could be read as a political statement. During the persecution against Hōnen and his disciples, two politically influential Tendai monks, Jien and Ryōkai, intervened in the dispute over Hōnen's followers to restore order within the Tendai school. Jien was a younger brother of Kanezane. Ryōkai was Kanezane's son. See Taira Masayuki, *Shinran to sono jidai*, Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001, p. 188.

13 Scholars generally agree that Myōe's criticism of the *Senchakushū* "centers on Hōnen's rejection of the necessity of the mind aspiring for enlightenment (Skt. bodhicitta) for the practicer of the nembutsu. Hōnen considered beings of the latter age (Jpn. mappō) incapable of awakening the mind of enlightenment and classified it with the various practices of the Path of Sages, which were to be put aside in favor of simply saying the Name in accord with the Primal Vow." "Introduction to Teaching, Practice, and Realization," in *CWS*, 2:17.

14 Among the leading disciples of Hōnen, for example, Ryūkan wrote the *Gusanshingi* in 1216 and the *Gokuraku Jōdoshūgi* in 1220, Seikaku (1167–1235) wrote the *Yuishinshō* in 1221, and Kōsai (1163–1247) wrote the *Gengibunshō* in 1218 to defend Hōnen's Pure Land teaching expounded in the *Senchakushū*. In the same year, the Shingon scholar Jōben (1166–1224) wrote the *Zoku Senchakumongiyoshō*. Another distinguished disciple of Hōnen and the founder of the Seizan branch of the Jōdoshū, Shōkū (1177–1247), lectured on various writings of Shandao from about 1215 though 1226. His lectures were later published in a series of works as the *Kangyōsho kanmongi*. The above are the only extant texts from before the persecution in Karoku 3 (1227). For an overview of Hōnen's disciples literary activities, see Ishida Mitsuyuki, *Hōnen shōnin monka no Jōdo kyōgaku no kenkyū*, 2 vols, Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1979, 2:398–406.

15 This persecution is often referred to as the Karoku persecution (Jpn. Karoku no honan). For an overview of the presecution, see Taira, *Shinran*, pp. 168–213. For a more detailed historical analysis, see Taira Masayuki, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to Bukkyō*, Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1992, pp. 329–387.

16 The document is found in the *Kinkoshū* compiled by Nikō (1253–1314), a disciple of Nichiren. The text is cited in Taira, *Nihon chūsei*, p. 332.

17 Taira, *Shinran*, pp. 184–190. For a detailed analysis of the historical documents related to the Karoku persectution, see Taira, *Nihon chūsei*, pp. 331–361.

18 Taira, *Shinran*, p. 190.
19 Benchō (1162–1238) wrote the *Matsudai nembutsu jushuin* in 1228. He also wrote the *Tessenchakuhongan nembutsushū* in 1237. Shōkū's *Kangyōsho tahitsushō* was completed around 1235. In the same year, another of Hōnen's disciples, Genchi (1183–1238), wrote the *Senchaku yōketsu* (1237) in Kyoto. It is also noteworthy that there was another direct disciple of Hōnen, Chōsai (1184–1266), who remained active in Kyoto throughout this period. See Ishida, 2:401–405.
20 Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Kamakura Shin Bukkyō no sōshisha to sono hihansha," in *Hōnen*, Tuskamoto Zenryū, ed., *Nihon no meicho*, vol. 5, Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1983, p. 64.
21 James Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan*, 1989, reprinted Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002, pp. 31–32.
22 *CWS*, 1:291.
23 Seikaku concludes the *Yuishinshō* with the following remarks (see also *CWS*, 2:15): "Although there are many important doctrines concerning the nembutsu, they can be summarized in the preceding way. Some people who read this will surely ridicule it. Nevertheless, both belief and slander will become a cause for each one's birth in the Pure Land. With the pledges of friendship in this life – brief as a dream – to guide us, we tie the bonds for meeting before enlightenment in the coming life. If I am behind, I will be guided by others; if I go first, I will guide others. Becoming true friends through many lives, we bring each other to the practice of the Buddha-way, and as true teachers in each life, we will together sunder all delusion and attachment" (*CWS*, 1:697). The last sentence of Seikaku's conclusion borrows a passage from Tao-ch'o's *An-lo-chi* that, interestingly, Shinran cites after the passage quoted above. "*Passages on the Land of Happiness* states: I have collected true words to aid others in their practice for attaining birth, in order that the process be made continuous, without end and without interruption, by which those who have been born first guide those who come later, and those who are born later join those who were born before. This is so that the boundless ocean of birth-and-death be exhausted" (CWS, 1:291).
24 Stone, pp. 148–149, and Taira, *Shinran*, pp. 203–207.
25 Taira, *Shinran*, pp. 193–194.
26 Taira Masayuki believes that Shinran did not know of Seikaku's role behind the Karoku persecution, because later Shinran continuously recommended his followers to read Seikaku's *Yuishinshō* (Essentials of Faith Alone). In particular, in 1230, three years after the Karoku presecution, Shinran is known to have made a copy of the *Yuishinshō* from Seikaku's original manuscript (see Taira, *Shinran*, pp. 212–213, and *Nihon chusei*, p. 330). However, considering the fact that the Karoku persecution was initiated by the Tendai scholar Jōshō in the Kantō, it is difficult to imagine that Shinran, who was living in the area as a disciple of Hōnen, was not informed about the details of the persecution. Why Shinran became interested in the *Yuishinshō* after the Karoku persecution is not clear. How he got hold of Seikaku's original manuscript, while he was presumably still living in the Kantō, is also not known. It is, however, clear that Shinran never lost faith in Seikaku's understanding of Hōnen as expounded in the *Yuishinshō*. The ambivalent characteristics of Seikaku, one of the most eminent Tendai scholars of the Kamakura period, is an issue that needs further attention.
27 Shinran's writing style of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* is influenced by one of the Chinese Buddhist literary genres, called *monruishū* (collection of passages). Modern scholars agree that Shinran most likely adopted the style from the *Lo-pan wei-lei* (Collection of Passages on the Land of Bliss, Jpn. Rakuhō monrui, T. vol. 47,

no. 1969) published in 1200 by Zongshao (1151–1214) in Song China, which was introduced to Japan during the Kamakura period. It is also noteworthy that Shinran cited novel Chinese works such as the Commentary on Yuanzhao's Commentary on the Contemplation Sūtra (Jpn. *Kangyōsho shōkanki*, written in 1181, included in the *Jōdoshū zensho*, Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1970, vol. 5) and the Notes to Yuanzhao's Commentary on the Amida Sūtra (Jpn. *Amidakyō monjiki*, published in 1217, included in the *Jōdoshū zensho*, vol. 5) by Jiedu (d. *c.*1189); the *Kanmuryōjukyō gyōsho* (abbreviated title, *Kangyōsho*, in T. vol. 37) and the *Amidakyōsho* (T. vol. 37) by Yuanzhao (1048–1116). These texts are thought to be some of the many texts that Shunjō (1166–1227) of Sennyūji brought back from China. Zongshao's text was probably also included in that collection. See *CWS*, 2:14, and Ishida Mitsuyuiki, *Shinran kyōgaku no kisoteki kenkyū 2*, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1977, pp. 154–179 and 259–264.

28 *CWS*, 2:23.

29 Ibid., 2:18.

30 Ibid.

31 For medieval Japanese Buddhist hermeneutics, see Stone, pp. 97–236.

32 Ibid., p. 159.

33 *CWS*, 2:289.

34 Confucius, *The Analects*, Book XI, 12, D. C. Lau, tr., New York: Penguin Books, 1979, p. 107.

35 Shin scholars often defend Shinran's readings: "It is not that he ignored their original intent; rather, he rendered the authors' intent more plainly and profoundly than the authors' original expression. He quotes the scriptures and yet changes the readings because, while receiving the tradition, he went beyond it. By delving to the very depths of the Pure Land teaching he transcended it and, at the same time, brought about a revolutionary development within the Pure Land tradition itself" (*CWS*, 2:27).

36 *CWS*, 1:217.

37 Dobbins, pp. 22–24.

38 Asada Masahiro, "Hieizan jidai no Shinran Shōnin," in Asada Masahiro, *Ikasareru inochi wo mitsumete*, Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 2003, pp. 159–231.

39 Stone, p. 106.

40 Ibid., p. 148.

41 Ibid., pp. 148–150.

42 Dobbins, pp. 38–46.

43 Stone also notes that it has been suggested that Shinran's adoption of the Eshin school method of Tendai studies is evidenced not only by the *kanjin*-style reading of texts. The structure of the text of the *Kyōgyōshinshō* might also have been inspired by the teaching of the Eshin school, which was eventually systematized as the "threefold seven great matters" (Jpn. *sanjū shichika no daiji*). The "threefold" aspects are three categories of transmissions, teaching (Jpn. *kyō*), practice (Jpn. *gyō*), and realization (Jpn. *shō*), which corresponds with the full title of the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, *Ken Jōdo shinjitsu kyō gyō shō monrui* (A Collection of Passages Revealing the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way). See Stone, pp. 187–188, and Asada, pp. 235–239.

44 Stone, pp. 38–39. Stone also notes an interesting episode in Shōshin's life which reflects his personality as an "ivory-tower" scholar: "According to a tradition, Shōshin was so absorbed in his doctrinal studies that he knew nothing about the fighting between the Taira and Minamoto." Stone, pp. 38–39, and 224; see also Taira, *Shinran*, p. 198.

45 Taira, *Shinran*, pp. 197–198.

46 See Ishida, *Hōnen*, 1:197, and Shimaji, p. 474.
47 *Gusanshingi*, cited in Ishida, *Hōnen*, 1:209.
48 Hazama Jikō, *Nihon Bukkyō no tenkai to sono kichō (ge): Chūko Tendai no kenkyū*, 1948, reprint, Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1968, pp. 11–94.
49 *CWS*, 2:17–18, and Ishida, *Hōnen*, 1:166–180, and 2:424–428.
50 Although this generalization is somewhat oversimplified, we can safely say that at least this tendency is recognizable in the extant writings of Hōnen's disciples after the Karoku persecution. For the details of Shinran's doctrinal position *vis-à-vis* Hōnen's other disciples, see Ishida, *Hōnen*, 2:529–534.
51 Ishida, *Hōnen*, 1:195–241, and 2:530.
52 This example is cited and explained in Alfred Bloom, *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977, pp. 48–49. Jacqueline Stone also mentions this passage, pp. 159–160. She, however, mistakenly calls the passage "the eighteenth vow." Also Shinran's addition of a honorific verb is wrongly identified as *shitamaeri*, which should be corrected to *seshimatamaeri*.
53 Where Shinran alters the readings has been underlined in the English translation. The translation is followed in the appendix by the *kanbun* text and his *yomikudashi* (breakdown reading) based on the notation. The *kanbun* and *yomikudashi* texts corresponding with Shinran's alterations are also included in the appendix, complementing the English translation of the standard reading to demonstrate the difference in the readings.
54 *CWS*, 1:80, modified.
55 Ibid., 2:259, modified.
56 *Shime* in the word *seshimetamaeri* is a variant of *shimu* which is most commonly used to make the causative form of a verb. When it used with another honorific verb ending, such as "verb+*shime*+*tamaeri*," the word becomes a higher honorific form than the original honorific. See Nakada Norio, Wada Toshimasa, and Kitahara Yasuo, eds, *Kogo daijiten*, Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1983, p. 803.
57 *CWS*, 1:29, modified.
58 Ibid., 2:254, modified.
59 Ibid., 1:88, modified.
60 The altered parts of speech are *subekaraku* (adverb) > *mochiiru* (verb); *ketsujō* (adjective) > *ketsujō shite* (verb); *ganzuru* (verb) > *gan* (noun).
61 *CWS*, 1:53.
63 Hōnen's statement on "three choices" (Jpn. *sansen no mon*), cited in the *Kyōgyōshinshō*, reads as follows: "If you desire to free yourself quickly from birth-and-death, of the two excellent teachings leave aside the Path of Sages and choosing, enter the Pure Land way. If you desire to enter the Pure Land way, of the two methods of practice, right and sundry, cast aside all sundry practices and choosing, take the right practice. If you desire to perform the right practice, of the two kinds of acts, true and auxiliary, further put aside the auxiliary and choosing, solely perform the act of true settlement. The act of true settlement is to say the Name of the Buddha. Saying the Name unfailingly brings about birth, for this is based on the Buddha's Primal Vow" (CWS, 1:53).
63 *CWS*, 1:241.
64 Ibid., 2:23.
65 Ibid., 2:25.

APPENDIX

1　The Analects states: Chi-lu asked, “Should one worship spirits?” Confucius said, “One should not worship spirits. Why should people worship spirits?”

『論語』云、季路問、「事二鬼神一」、子曰「不三能二事一、人焉能事二鬼
二　トハク　ツカヘンカト 二　ノ　ク　ズ　ク ツカフルコト　ク　ヘムセト

神一」
二

『論語』にいはく、「季路問はく、〈鬼神に事へんか〉と。子のいはく、〈事ふることあたはず。人いづくんぞよく鬼神に事へんや〉」と。

2　Chi Lu asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served. The Master said, “You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?”

「季路問事鬼神、子曰、不能事人、焉能事鬼神」

「季路、鬼神に事へんことを問ふ。子のいはく、〈いまだ人に事ふることあたはず、いづくんぞよく鬼神に事へんや〉。」

3　Further, he [Shan-tao] states: Meditative good is a means to lead one to discernment [of the Primal Vow].

Further, he [Shan-tao] states: Non-meditative good is a means to lead one to the practice [of the nembutsu].

又云「定善示二観一縁」
ハ メス ヲ ナリト

又云「散善顯二行一縁」
ハ メス ヲ ナリト

またいはく、「定善は観を示す縁なり」と。
またいはく、「散善は行を顯す縁なり」と。

4　Passages on meditative good introducing the contemplation [on Amida and the Pure Land] (定善示観縁).

Passages on non-meditative good introducing the practice [of good in everyday life] (散善顯行縁).

5　Rely on the words, not on the meaning. That is what ignorant people love to follow. What a shame!

依文不依義、愚者之所好也。可恥乎。
文に依りて義に依らぎるは、愚者の好むところなり。恥ずべきかな。

6　Shinran's reading:

The passage declaring the fulfillment of the Primal Vow in the *[Larger] Sūtra* states:

> All sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of shinjin and joy. [Amida Buddha] shall direct [his] sincere mind to them (*shishin ni ekō seshimetamaeri*). If they aspire to be born in that land, they then immediately attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma.

> 本願成就文、經言、「諸有衆生、聞二其名號一、信心歡喜、乃至一念。
> ノ　二ク　アラユル　キキテ　ノ　ヲ　セムコト　セム
> 至心回向。願三生二彼國一、即得二往生一住二不退転一。唯除二五逆誹謗正
> セシメタマヘリゼバ　ト　ニ　エ　ヲ　セム　ニ　クト
> 法一」。〔已上〕
> トヲバ

> 本願成就の文、『經』にのたまはく、「あらゆる衆生、その名號を聞きて、信心歡喜せんこと、乃至一念せん。至心に回向せしめたまへり。かの國に生ぜんと願ぜば、すなはち往生を得、不退転に住せん。ただ五逆と誹謗正法とをば除く」と。以上

7　Standard reading:

If all sentient beings, as they hear the Name, realize even one thought-moment of shinjin and joy, sincerely direct their merits to [others], and aspire to be born in that land, they then shall immediately attain birth and dwell in the stage of non-retrogression.

諸有衆生、聞其名號、信心歡喜乃至一念、至心回向願生彼國、即得往生住不退転。

あらゆる衆生、その名號を聞きて、信心歡喜せんこと、乃至一念し、至心に回向して、かの國に生ぜんと願ぜば、すなはち往生を得、不退転に住せん 。

8 Shinran's reading:

How is directing of virtue accomplished? It is by [Amida Buddha, who] never abandons any sentient being in suffering, but constantly aspires for [the salvation of the suffering beings] in [his] heart, and <u>venerably fulfills (*etamaeru*)</u> the mind of great compassion by taking the directing of virtue as foremost.

The directing of virtue has two aspects: that for going forth to the Pure Land and that for returning to this world. "Directing for going forth" means that [Amida Buddha] gives [his] own virtues to all sentient beings and <u>has vowed (*sagan shite*) [as Dharmākara Bodhisattva] to bring them all to birth (*ōjō seshimetamau*)</u> in Amida Tathagata's Pure Land of happiness.

云何廻向 。不三捨二一切苦惱衆生一、心常作願、廻向為二首一得三成二就大悲
ガ　スル　ズシテ　ノ　ヲ　ニ ニ　スラク　ヲ　シテ ト　タマヘルガ　コトヲ

心一故 。廻向有二三種相一 。一者往相、二者還相 。往相者、以二己功德一
ヲ　ニトノタマヘリニ　リ　ノ　ナリ　ハ　テ レガ　ヲ

廻二施一切衆生一、作願、共往二生彼阿彌陀如來安樂淨土一 。
シテ　ニ　シテ　ニ　セシメタマヘルナリ　ノ　ニ

「〈いかんが回向する 。一切苦惱の衆生を捨てずして、心につねに作願すらく、回向を首として大悲心を成就することを<u>得たまへる</u>がゆゑに〉（淨土論）とのたまへり 。回向に二種の相あり 。一つには往相、二つには還相なり 。往相とは、ぉのれが功德をもつて一切衆生に回施して、<u>作願して</u>、ともにかの阿彌陀如來の安樂淨土に<u>往生せしめたまへる</u>なり 。

9 Standard reading:

[Bodhisattvas] never abandon sentient beings in suffering, constantly aspire [for their awakening] in their hearts, and take the directing of virtue as foremost. That is because they wish to accomplish their mind of great compassion.

不捨一切苦惱衆生、心常作願、廻向為首 。得成就大悲心故 。

一切苦惱の衆生を捨てずして、心につねに願を作し、回向を首となす 。大悲心を成就することを得んとするがゆゑなり 。

“Directing for going forth” means that [bodhisattvas] shall give their own virtues to all sentient beings and aspire to be born together with them in Amida Tathāgata’s Pure Land of happiness.

往相者、以己功德廻施一切衆生、作願共往生彼阿彌陀如來安樂淨土。

往相とは、ぉのが功德をもつて一切衆生に回施して、ともにかの阿彌陀如來の安樂淨土に往生せんと作願するなり。

10 Shinran’s reading:

The third is the mind of aspiration for birth and directing of virtue. . . . Again, let <u>those who are to be born (*shōzuru mono*)</u> [in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land] with the mind of aspiration and directing of virtue to aspire [for attainment of birth] by unfailingly and <u>decidedly (*ketsujō shite*) taking (*mochiite*) the Vow (*gan*)</u> which [Amida Buddha] <u>has directed (*ekō shitamaeru*) to them with [his] true and real mind</u>.

三者回向発願心〔乃至〕又回向発願生者、必須下決定真実心中回向願上作二得生想一。
シテズルノハ　モチィテ　シテ　ノ　シタマヘル　ヲ　ナセ　ノ　ヲ

〈三者回向発願心〉。乃至また回向発願して<u>生ずる</u>ものは、かならず<u>決定して真実心のうちに回向したまへる願を須ゐて</u>得生の想をなせ。

11 Standard reading:

Again, those who wish to be born [in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land] by directing their virtue with the mind of aspiration [for attainment of birth] must unfailingly aspire to be born [in the Pure Land] by directing [their virtue] and aspiring [to be born] with the true and real determined mind.

又回向発願生者、必須決定真実心中回向願、作得生想。

また回向発願して生ぜんと願ずるものは、かならずすべからく決定真実心のうちに回向し願じて、得生の想をなすべし。

INDEX